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AUGUSTA J. EVANS

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BEULAH

BY

AUGUSTA J. EVANS

Author of "At the Mercy of Tiberius,"
"St. Elmo," "Macaria,"
"Inez," etc.



NEW YORK
THE NEW YORK BOOK COMPANY
1909



BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

AUGUSTA J. EVANS (Wilson), American novelist, was born in Columbus, Ga., May 8, 1835, lived at San Antonio in the midst of the Texans' struggles for independence and the subsequent Mexican War and later at Mobile, Ala., where she married L. M. Wilson in 1868.

Her books are more massive in conception than those of any other American woman novelist and achieved instant popularity which still endures. Following the publication of *Inez* in 1856, she brought out, in 1859, *Beulah* which met instantaneous success and has run through many editions. Her devotion to the Confederacy is pictured in *Macaria* (1863) dedicated *To the Brave Soldiers of the Southern Army*. This novel, although seized and destroyed by a Federal officer in Kentucky, was later brought out in the North where it has found a large sale. Lapse of time has served but to increase this novelist's vogue and in recent years, although living in affluence, she has yielded to repeated requests of admirers and written again.

Other of Mrs. Evans-Wilson's novels are: *St. Elmo* (1866), one of her most famous works; *Vashti: or, Until Death Us Do Part* (1867); *Infelice* (1876); *At the Mercy of Tiberius* (1887); *A Speckled Bird* (1902); and *Devota* (1907).

TO MY AUNT
MRS. SEABORN JONES
OF GEORGIA
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
AS A FEEBLE TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION
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“A perfect woman, nobly planned;
To warn, to counsel, to command,
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Prudence, foresight, strength, and skill.”

—WORDSWORTH.

BEULAH.

CHAPTER I.

A JANUARY sun had passed the zenith, and the slanting rays flamed over the window panes of a large brick building, bearing on its front in golden letters the inscription, "Orphan Asylum." The structure was commodious, and surrounded by wide galleries, while the situation offered a silent tribute to the discretion and good sense of the board of managers. The front door was closed, but upon the broad granite steps, where the sunlight lay warm and tempting, sat a trio of the inmates. In the foreground was a slight, fairy form, "a wee, winsome thing," with coral lips, and large, soft blue eyes, set in a frame of short, clustering golden curls. She looked about six years old, and was clad, like her companions, in canary-colored flannel dress and blue-check apron. Lillian was the pet of the asylum, and now her rosy cheek rested upon her tiny white palm, as though she wearied of the picture book which lay at her feet. The figure beside her was one whose marvelous beauty riveted the gaze of all who chanced to see her. The child could have been but a few months older than Lillian, yet the brilliant black eyes, the peculiar curve of the dimpled mouth, and long, dark ringlets gave to the oval face a maturer and more piquant loveliness. The cast of Claudia's countenance bespoke her foreign parentage, and told of the warm, fierce Italian blood that glowed in her cheeks. On the upper step, in the rear of these two, sat a girl whose age could not have been very accurately guessed from her countenance. At a first, casual glance, one thought Beulah rather homely, nay, decidedly ugly; yet, to the curious physiognomist, this face presented greater attractions than either of the others. A pair of large gray eyes set beneath an overhanging forehead, a boldly projecting forehead, broad and smooth; a rather large, but finely cut mouth, an irreproachable nose, of the order farthest removed from aquiline, and heavy, black eyebrows, which, instead of arching, stretched straight across and nearly met.

"What is to-day? Let me see, Wednesday; yes, this is the evening for the ladies to meet here. Lil, is my face right

clean? because that red-headed Miss Dorothy always takes particular pains to look at it. I do hate her, don't you?" cried Claudia.

"Why, Claudy, I am astonished to hear you talk so. Miss Dorothy helps to buy food and clothes for us, and you ought to be ashamed to speak of her as you do." As she delivered this reprimand, Beulah snatched up a small volume and hid it in her workbasket.

"I don't believe she gives us much. I do hate her, and I can't help it, she is so ugly, and cross, and vinegar faced. I should not like her to look at my mug of milk. You don't love her either, any more than I do, only you won't say anything about her. But kiss me, and I promise I will be good, and not make faces at her in my apron." Beulah stooped down and warmly kissed the suppliant, then took her little sister's hand and led her into the house, just as the carriage reached the door. The weekly visiting committee consisted of four of the lady managers, but to-day the number was swelled to six. A glance at the inspectors sufficed to inform Beulah that something of more than ordinary interest had convened them on the present occasion, and she was passing on to her accustomed place, when her eyes fell upon a familiar face, partially concealed by a straw bonnet. It was her Sabbath-school teacher; a sudden, glad light flashed over the girl's countenance, and the pale lips disclosed a set of faultlessly beautiful teeth, as she smiled and hastened to her friend.

"How do you do, Mrs. Mason? I am so glad to see you!"

"Thank you, Beulah; I have been promising myself this pleasure a great while. I saw Eugene this morning, and I told him I was coming out. He sent you a book and a message. Here is the book. You are to mark the passages you like particularly, and study them well until he comes. When did you see him last?"

Mrs. Mason put the volume in her hand as she spoke.

"It has been more than a week since he was here, and I was afraid he was sick. He is very kind and good to remember the book he promised me, and I thank you very much, Mrs. Mason, for bringing it." The face was radiant with new-born joy, but it all died out when Miss Dorothea White (little Claudia's particular aversion) fixed her pale-blue eyes upon her, and asked, in a sharp, discontented tone:

"What ails that girl, Mrs. Williams? She does not work enough, or she would have some blood in her cheeks. Has she been sick?"

"No, madam, she has not been sick exactly, but somehow she never looks strong and hearty like the others. She works well enough. There is not a better or more industrious girl in the asylum, but I rather think she studies too much. I have

always hoped the managers would conclude to educate her for a teacher. She is so studious, I know she would learn very rapidly.

"My dear madam, you do not in the least understand what you are talking about. It would require at least five years' careful training to fit her to teach, and our finances do not admit of any such expenditure."

"How is the babe that was brought here last week?" asked Mrs. Taylor.

"Oh, he is doing beautifully. Bring him round the table, Susan," and the rosy, smiling infant was handed about for closer inspection. A few general inquiries followed, and then Beulah was not surprised to hear the order given for the children to retire, as the managers had some especial business with their matron. The orphan band defiled into the hall, and dispersed to their various occupations, but Beulah approached the matron, and whispered something, to which the reply was:

"No; if you have finished that other apron, you shall sew no more to-day. You can pump a fresh bucket of water, and then run out into the yard for some air."

In the debating room of the visiting committee, Miss White again had the floor. She was no less important a personage than vice president of the board of managers, and felt authorized to investigate closely, and redress all grievances.

"Who did you say sent that book here, Mrs. Mason?"

"Eugene Rutland, who was once a member of Mrs. William's orphan charge in this asylum. Mr. Graham adopted him, and he is now known as Eugene Graham. He is very much attached to Beulah, though I believe they are not at all related."

"He left the asylum before I entered the board. What sort of boy is he? I have seen him several times, and do not particularly fancy him."

"Oh, madam, he is a noble boy! It was a great trial to me to part with him three years ago. He is much older than Beulah, and loves her as well as if she were his sister."

"I suppose he has put this notion of being a teacher into her head; well, she must get it out, that is all. I know of an excellent situation, where a lady is willing to pay six dollars a month for a girl of her age to attend to an infant, and I think we must secure it for her."

"Oh, Miss White! she is not able to carry a heavy child always in her arms," expostulated Mrs. Williams.

"Yes, she is. I will venture to say she will look all the better for it at the month's end."

The last sentence, fraught with interest to herself, fell upon Beulah's ear, as she passed through the hall, and an unerring intuition told her "you are the one." She put her hands over

her ears to shut out Miss Dorothea's sharp tones, and hurried away, with a dim foreboding of coming evil.

CHAPTER II.

THE following day, in obedience to the proclamation of the mayor of the city, was celebrated as a season of special thanksgiving, and the inmates of the asylum were taken to church to morning service. After an early dinner, the matron gave them permission to amuse themselves the remainder of the day as their various inclinations prompted. There was an immediate dispersion of the assemblage, and only Beulah lingered beside the matron's chair.

"Mrs. Williams, may I take Lilly with me, and go out into the woods at the back of the asylum?"

"I want you at home this evening, but I dislike very much to refuse you."

"Oh, never mind, if you wish me to do anything."

Tears rolled over the matron's face, and hastily averting her head, she wiped them away with the corner of her apron.

"Can I do anything to help you? What is the matter?"

"Never mind, Beulah; do you get your bonnet and go to the edge of the woods—not too far, remember; and if I must have you, why I will send for you."

"I would rather not go if it will be any trouble."

"No, dear, it's no trouble; I want you to go," answered the matron, turning hastily away. Beulah felt very strongly inclined to follow, and inquire what was in store for her; but the weight on her heart pressed more heavily, and murmuring to herself, "It will come time enough, time enough," she passed on.

"May I come with you and Lilly?" entreated little Claudia.

"Yes, come on. You and Lilly can pick up some nice, smooth burs to make baskets of."

The path along which their feet pattered so carelessly led to a hollow, or ravine, and the ground on the opposite side rose into small hillocks, thickly wooded with pines. Beulah sat down upon a mound of moss and leaves; while Claudia and Lillian, throwing off their hoods, commenced the glorious game of sliding. Apart from all this sat Beulah. An open volume lay on her lap; it was Longfellow's Poems, the book Eugene had sent her, and leaves were turned down at "Excelsior," and the "Psalm of Life." There was an uplifted look, a brave, glad, hopeful light in the gray eyes, generally so troubled in their expression. A sacred song rose on the evening air, a solemn, but beautiful hymn. She sang the words of the great, strength-giving poet, the "Psalm of Life."

She was startled by the sharp bark of a dog, and, looking up, saw a gentleman leaning against a neighboring tree, and regarding her very earnestly. He came forward as she perceived him, and said, with a pleasant smile:

"You need not be afraid of my dog. Like his master, he would not disturb you till you finished your song. My little friend, tell me who taught you to sing?"

She had hastily risen, and a slight glow tinged her cheek at his question. Though naturally reserved and timid, there was a self-possession about her unusual in children of her age, and she answered, in a low voice: "I have never had a teacher, sir; but I listen to the choir on Sabbath, and sing our Sunday-school hymns at church."

"Do you know who wrote those words you sang just now? I was not aware they had been set to music!"

"I found them in this book yesterday, and liked them so much that I tried to sing them by one of our hymn tunes."

Beulah chanced just then to turn toward the asylum, and saw one of the older girls running across the common. The shadow on her face deepened, and she looked around for Claudia and Lillian.

"Come, Claudy—Lilly—our matron has sent for us."

"Do you belong to the asylum?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir," answered she, and as the children came up she bowed and turned homeward.

"Wait a moment; those are not your sisters, certainly?" His eyes rested with admiration on their beautiful faces.

"This one is, sir; that is not." As she spoke, she laid her hand on Lillian's head. Claudia looked shyly at the stranger, and then seizing Beulah's dress, exclaimed:

"Oh, Beulah, don't let us go just yet!"

"Yes, we must go; yonder comes Katy for us."

"Oh, what a beautiful carriage!" cried Claudia, as they approached the door, and descried an elegant carriage, glittering with silver mountings, and drawn by a pair of spirited black horses.

"Yes, that it is, and there is a lady and gentleman here who must be very rich, judging from their looks. They brought Miss White."

"Here, Beulah, bring them to the dormitory," said Mrs. Williams, hurrying them upstairs. She hastily washed Claudia's face and recurled her hair, while the same offices were performed for Lillian by her sister.

"What does all this mean?" said Beulah, taking her sister's hand.

"Don't ask me, poor child." As she spoke, the good woman ushered the trio into the reception-room.

Miss White was eagerly talking to a richly-dressed and very pretty woman, while a gentleman stood beside them, impatiently twirling his seal and watch key.

All looked up, and Miss White exclaimed:

"Here they are; now, my dear Mrs. Grayson, I rather think you can be suited. Come here, little ones." She drew Claudia to her side, while Lilly clung closer to her sister.

"Oh, what beauties! Only look at them, Alfred!" Mrs. Grayson glanced eagerly from one to the other.

"Very pretty children, indeed, my dear. Extremely pretty; particularly the black-eyed one."

"I don't know; I believe I admire the golden-haired one most. She is a perfect fairy. Come here, my love, and let me talk to you," continued she, addressing Lilly. The child clasped her sister's fingers, and did not advance an inch.

"Do not hold her, Beulah. Come to the lady, Lillian," said Miss White. As Beulah gently disengaged her hand, she felt as if the anchor of hope had been torn from her hold, but, stooping down, she whispered:

"Go to the lady, Lilly darling; I will not leave you."

Thus encouraged, the little figure moved slowly forward, and paused in front of the stranger. Mrs. Grayson took her small, white hands tenderly, and pressing a warm kiss on her lips, said, in a kind, winning tone:

"What is your name, my dear?"

"Lillian, ma'am, but sister calls me Lilly."

"Who is 'sister'—little Claudia here?"

"Oh, no! sister Beulah." And the soft, blue eyes turned lovingly toward that gentle sister.

"Good Heavens, Alfred, how totally unlike! This is one of the most beautiful children I have ever seen, and that girl yonder is ugly," said the lady, in an undertone to her husband, who was talking to Claudia. It was said in a low voice, but Beulah heard every syllable, and a glow of shame, for an instant, bathed her brow. Claudia heard it, too, and springing from Mr. Grayson's knee, she exclaimed, angrily:

"She isn't ugly; she is the smartest girl in the asylum, and I love her better than anybody in the world."

"Fanny, if you select that plain-spoken little one, you will have some temper to curb," suggested Mr. Grayson.

"Oh, my dear husband, I must have them both; only fancy how lovely they will be, dressed exactly alike. My little Lilly, and you, Claudia, will you come and be my daughters? I shall love you very much, and that gentleman will be your papa. He is very kind. You shall have big wax dolls, as high as your heads, and doll-houses, and tea-sets, and beautiful blue and pink silk dresses, and every evening I shall take you out to ride in my carriage. Each of you shall have a white

hat, with long, curling feathers. Will you come and live with me, and let me be your mamma?"

Beulah's face assumed an ashen hue, as she listened to these coaxing words. She had not thought of separation; the evil had never presented itself in this form, and, staggering forward, she clutched the matron's dress, saying, hoarsely:

"Oh, don't separate us! Don't let them take Lilly from me! I will do anything on earth; I will work my hands off; oh, do anything, but please don't give Lilly up!"

Claudia here interrupted:

"I should like to go well enough, if you will take Beulah, too. Lil, are you going?"

"No, no." Lillian broke away from the stranger's clasping arm, and rushed toward her sister; but Miss White sat between them, and, catching the child, she firmly, though very gently, held her back. Lilly was very much afraid of her, and bursting into tears, she cried, imploringly:

"Oh, sister! take me, take me!"

Beulah sprang to her side, and stood trembling like a weed bowed before the rushing gale. She knew that neither exposition nor entreaty would avail now, and she resolved to bear with fortitude what she could not avert. Lifting her head, she said, slowly:

"If I must give up my sister, let me do so as quietly as possible. Give her to me; then perhaps she will go more willingly. Do not force her away! Oh, do not force her!"

As she uttered these words, her lips were white and cold, and the agonized expression of her face made Mrs. Grayson shiver.

"Lilly, my darling! My own precious darling!" She bent over her sister, and the little arms clasped her neck tightly, as she lifted and bore her back to the dormitory.

Beulah sat down on the edge of the blue-curtained bed, and drew her idol close to her heart. She kissed the beautiful face, and smoothed the golden curls she had so long, and so lovingly arranged, and as the child returned her kisses, she felt as if rude hands were tearing her heartstrings loose.

Soon the matron entered, with a large bundle neatly wrapped. Her eyes were red, and there were traces of tears on her cheek. Looking tenderly down upon the trio, she said:

"Come, my pets, they will not wait any longer for you. I hope you will try to be good, and love each other, and Beulah shall come to see you." She took Claudia's hand and led her down the steps. Beulah lifted her sister, and carried her in her arms, as she had from her birth, and at every step kissed her lips and brow.

Mr. and Mrs. Grayson were standing at the front door; they

both looked pleased, as Lilly had ceased crying, and the carriage door was opened to admit them.

Beulah drew near to Mrs. Grayson, and said, in a low, but imploring tone:

"Oh, madam, love my sister, and always speak affectionately to her; then she will be good and obedient. I may come to see her often, may I not?"

"Certainly," replied the lady, in a tone which chilled poor Beulah's heart. She swallowed a groan of agony, and, straining the loved one to her bosom, pressed her lips to Lilly's.

"God bless my little sister, my darling, my all!" She put the child in Mr. Grayson's extended arms, and only saw that her sister looked back appealingly to her. Miss White came up and said something which she did not hear, and, turning hastily away, she went up to the dormitory and seated herself on Lilly's vacant bed. The child knew not how the hours passed; she sat with her face buried in her hands, until the light of a candle flashed into the darkened chamber, and the kind voice of the matron fell on her ear.

"Poor child, I would have saved you all this had it been in my power; but, when once decided by the managers, you know I could not interfere. The managers think it is best that you should go out and take a situation. I am sorry I am forced to give you up—very sorry—for you have always been a good girl, and I love you dearly. You are to take care of an infant, and they will give you six dollars a month besides your board and clothes. Try to do your duty, child, and perhaps something may happen which will enable you to turn teacher."

"Well, I will do the best I can. I do not mind work, but then Lilly."

Again the light streamed into the room. She buried her face deeper in her apron.

"Beulah," said a troubled, anxious voice.

"Oh, Eugene!" She sprang up with a dry sob, and threw herself into his arms.

"I know it all, dear Beulah; but come down to Mrs. Williams' room, there is a bright fire there, and your hands are as cold as ice. You will make yourself sick sitting here without even a shawl around you." He led her downstairs to the room occupied by the matron, who kindly took her work to the dining-room and left them to talk unrestrainedly.

"Sit down in this rocking-chair and warm your hands."

He seated himself near her, and, as the firelight glowed on the faces of both, they contrasted strangely. One was classical and full of youthful beauty, the other wan, haggard and sorrow-stained. He looked about sixteen, and promised to become a strikingly handsome man, while the proportions of his pol-

ished brow indicated more than ordinary intellectual endowments. He watched his companion earnestly, sadly, and, leaning forward, took one of her hands.

"Beulah, I see from your face that you have not shed a single tear. I wish you would not keep your sorrow so pent up in your heart."

"Oh, I can't help it! If it were not for you, I believe I should die, I am so very miserable. Eugene, if you could have seen our Lilly cling to me, even to the last moment. It seems to me my heart will break." She sank her weary head on his shoulder.

"Yes, darling, I know you are suffering very much; but remember that 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' Perhaps He sees it is best that you should give her up for a while, and if so, will you not try to bear it cheerfully, instead of making yourself sick with useless grief?" He gently smoothed the hair from her brow as he spoke. She did not reply. He did not expect that she would, and continued in the same kind tone:

"I am much more troubled about your taking this situation. If I had known it earlier I would have endeavored to prevent it, but I suppose it cannot be helped now, for a while, at least. For my part, I look forward to the time when you and I shall have a home of our own, and then Lilly and Claudy can be with us. I was talking to Mrs. Mason about it yesterday; she loves you very much. I dare say all will be right, so cheer up, Beulah, and do look on the bright side."

"Eugene, you are the only bright side I have to look on. Sometimes I think you will get tired of me, and if you ever do, I shall want to die. Oh, how could I bear to know you did not love me." She raised her head and looked earnestly at his noble face.

Eugene laughingly repeated her words.

"Get tired of you, indeed—not I, little sister."

"Oh, I forgot to thank you for your book; I like it better than anything I ever read; some parts are so beautiful—so very grand. I keep it in my basket, and read every moment I can spare."

"I knew you would like it, particularly 'Excelsior.' Beulah, I have written excelsior on my banner, and I intend, like that noble youth, to press forward over every obstacle, mounting at every step, until I, too, stand on the highest pinnacle, and plant my banner where its glorious motto shall float over the world. That poem stirs my very soul like martial music, and I feel as if I should like to see Mr. Longfellow, to tell him how I thank him for having written it."

He rose as he spoke.

"You will be cold walking home. Let me get you a shawl."

"No, I left my overcoat in the hall—here it is."

She followed him out to the door, as he drew it on and put on his cap. The moonlight shone over the threshold, and he thought she looked ghostly as it fell upon her face. He took her hand, pressed it gently, and said:

"Good night, dear Beulah."

"Good-by, Eugene. Do come and see me again soon."

A day or two later Beulah was installed in the mansion of Mrs. Martin, as the nurse of baby John.

Life flowed on peacefully, and Beulah might have been content, had she not had misgivings about her sister. She endeavored to see Lilly, but Mrs. Grayson, who was not a cruel woman, though very worldly, did not approve of her adopted daughter associating with a hired nurse, and poor Beulah was forced to go away nearly broken-hearted.

One thing, however, made life bearable—and this was the advent of Dr. Hartwell. Baby John had been taken sick, and Dr. Hartwell was called in. But the physician saw that besides his child patient, there was another who needed relief. So, after prescribing for the suffering little one, he led Beulah to speak of herself, and, learning her whole story, he soothed her into at least a measure of contentment.

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE Johnny's illness proved long and serious, and for many days and nights he seemed on the verge of the tomb. His wailings were never hushed, except in Beulah's arms, and, as might be supposed, constant watching soon converted her into a mere shadow of her former self. Thus several weeks elapsed, and gradually the sick child grew stronger.

Then something happened to render the state of Beulah still more bitter. Eugene had broken the news that he was to go to a great German university, to be away for five years. Five years! Beulah felt that she must die before the time had come for his return—and then what changes might ensue! Yet even Beulah, when she sorrowfully took leave of him and bade him Godspeed, did not dream what the passing of the years would do for the Eugene whom she adored.

Several tedious weeks had rolled away since Eugene Graham left his sunny Southern home to seek learning in the venerable universities of the old world. During the winter, scarlet fever had hovered threateningly over the city, but as the spring advanced, hopes were entertained that all danger had passed. Consequently, when it was announced that the disease had made its appearance in a very malignant form in the house

adjoining Mrs. Martin's, she determined to send her children immediately out of town. To this plan Beulah made no resistance, though the memory of her little sister haunted her hourly. What could she do? Make one last attempt to see her, and if again refused, then it mattered not whither she went. When the preparations for their journey had been completed and Johnny slept soundly in his crib, Beulah put on her old straw bonnet and set out for Mr. Grayson's residence.

She walked on, with her head bowed, like one stooping from an impending blow, and when at last the crouching lions confronted her, she felt as if her heart had suddenly frozen. There stood the doctor's buggy. She sprang up the steps, and stretched out her hand for the bolt of the door. Long streamers of crape floated through her fingers. She stood still a moment, then threw open the door and rushed in. The hall floor was covered to muffle the tread; not a sound reached her, save the stirring of the china trees outside. Her hand was on the balustrade to ascend the steps, but her eyes fell upon a piece of crape fastened to the parlor door, and, pushing it ajar, she looked in. The furniture was draped; even the mirrors, and pictures, and on a small, oblong table in the center of the room, lay a shrouded form. With rigid limbs she tottered to the table, and laid her hand on the velvet pall; with closed eyes she drew it down, then held her breath and looked. There lay her idol, in the marble arms of death. Ah, how matchlessly beautiful, wrapped in her last sleep! Beulah's gaze dwelt upon this mocking loveliness, then the arms were thrown wildly up, and with a long, wailing cry, her head sank heavily on the velvet cushion beside the cold face of her dead darling. How long it rested there she never knew. Then she was lifted, and the motion aroused her torpid faculties; she moaned and opened her eyes. Dr. Hartwell was placing her on a sofa, and Mrs. Grayson stood by the table with a handkerchief over her eyes. With returning consciousness came a raving despair; Beulah sprang from the strong arm that strove to detain her, and laying one clinched hand on the folded fingers of the dead, raised the other fiercely toward Mrs. Grayson, and exclaimed, almost frantically:

"You have murdered her! I knew it would be so, when you took my darling from my arms, and refused my prayer! Ay, my prayer! I knelt and prayed you, in the name of God, to let me see her once more; to let me hold her to my heart, and kiss her lips, and forehead, and little slender hands. You scorned a poor girl's prayer; you taunted me with my poverty, and locked me from my darling, my Lilly, my all! Oh, woman! you drove me wild, and I cursed you and your husband. Ha! has your wealth and splendor saved her? God have mercy upon me; I feel as if I could curse you eternally.

Could you not have sent for me before she died? Oh, if I could only have taken her in my arms, and seen her soft, angel eyes looking up to me, and felt her little arms around my neck, and heard her say 'sister' for the last time! Would it have taken a dime from your purse, or made you less fashionable, to have sent for me before she died? 'Such measure as ye mete, shall be meted to you again.' May you live to have your heart trampled and crushed, even as you have trampled mine!"

Her arm sank to her side, and once more the blazing eyes were fastened on the young sleeper; while Mrs. Grayson, cowering like a frightened child, left the room. Beulah fell on her knees, and, crossing her arms on the table, bowed her head; now and then, broken, wailing tones passed the white lips. Dr. Hartwell stood in a recess of the window, with folded arms and tightly-compressed mouth, watching the young mourner. Once he moved toward her, then drew back, and a derisive smile distorted his features, as though he scorned himself for the momentary weakness. Then, as he noted the slight, quivering form and the thin hands, a look of remorseful agony swept over his countenance, and, coming back he said, very gently:

"Beulah, this is no place for you. Come with me and be my child."

She shook her head with a moan.

Passing his arm around her, he raised her from the carpet, and bore her out of the house of death. His buggy stood at the door, and, seating himself in it, he directed the boy who accompanied him to "drive home." Soon she was lifted out of the buggy, carried up a flight of steps, and then a flood of light flashed through the fingers upon her closed eyelids. Dr. Hartwell placed his charge on a sofa, and rang the bell. The summons was promptly answered by a negro woman of middle age. She stood at the door awaiting the order, but his eyes were bent on the floor, and his brows knitted.

"Master, did you ring?"

"Yes, tell my sister to come to me."

He took a turn across the floor, and paused by the open window. The door opened, and a tall, slender woman, of perhaps thirty-five years, entered the room. She was pale and handsome, with a profusion of short chestnut curls about her face. With her hand resting on the door, she said in a calm, clear tone:

"Well, Guy."

He started, and, turning from the window, approached her.

"May, I want a room arranged for this child as soon as possible. Will you see that a hot foot-bath is provided? When it is ready, send Harriet for her."

His sister's lips curled as she looked searchingly at the figure on the sofa, and said, coldly:

"What freak now, Guy?"

"I intend to adopt that poor little orphan; that is all!"

"Where did you pick her up, at the hospital?"

"No, she has been hired as a nurse, at a boarding-house."

"I thought you had had quite enough of protégés."

"Take care, May Chilton! Mark me. Lift the pall from the past once more, and you and Pauline must find another home, another protector. Now, will you see that a room is prepared as I directed?" He was very pale, and his eyes burned fiercely, yet his tone was calm and subdued. Mrs. Chilton bit her lips and withdrew. Dr. Hartwell walked up and down the room for a while, now and then looking sadly at the young stranger. Kindly he bent down, and whispered:

"Will you trust me, Beulah?"

She made no answer, but he saw her brow wrinkle, and knew that she shuddered. The servant came in to say that the room had been arranged, as he had directed. However surprised she might have been at this sudden advent of the simply-clad orphan in her master's study, there was not the faintest indication of it in her impenetrable countenance.

"Harriet, see that her feet are well bathed; and, when she is in bed, come for some medicine."

Then, drawing the hands from her eyes, he said to Beulah:

"Go with her, my child. I am glad I have you safe under my own roof, where no more cruel injustice can assail you."

He pressed her hand kindly, and, rising mechanically Beulah accompanied Harriet, who considerably supported the drooping form. The room to which she was conducted was richly furnished, and lighted by an elegant colored lamp, suspended from the ceiling. Mrs. Chilton stood near an arm-chair, looking moody and abstracted. Harriet carefully undressed the poor mourner, and, wrapping a shawl about her, placed her in the chair, and bathed her feet. Mrs. Chilton watched her with ill-concealed impatience. When the little dripping feet were dried, Harriet lifted her, as if she had been an infant, and placed her in bed, then brought the medicine from the study, and administered a spoonful of the mixture.

CHAPTER IV.

THROUGH quiet, woody dells roamed Beulah's spirit, and, hand in hand, she and Lilly trod flowery paths and rested beside clear, laughing brooks. It was not scarlet, but brain fever, and this was the fifth day that the sleeper had lain in a heavy stupor. Dr. Hartwell put back the hand he held, and, stooping

over, looked long and anxiously at the flushed face. The breathing was deep and labored, and, turning away, he slowly and noiselessly walked up and down the floor. To have looked at him then, in his purple silk *robe de chambre*, one would have scarcely believed that thirty years had passed over his head. He was tall and broad-chested, his head massive and well formed, his face a curious study. The brow was expansive and almost transparent in its purity, the dark, hazel eyes were singularly brilliant, while the contour of lips and chin was partially concealed by a heavy mustache and beard. The first glance at his face impressed strangers by its extreme pallor, but in a second look they were fascinated by the misty splendor of the eyes. In truth, those were strange eyes of Guy Hartwell—at times, searching and glittering like polished steel; occasionally lighting up with a dazzling radiance, and then as suddenly growing gentle, hazy, yet luminous, resembling the clouded aspect of a star seen through a thin veil of mist. His brown, curling hair was thrown back from the face, and exposed the outline of the ample forehead. Perhaps utilitarians would have carped at the feminine delicacy of the hands, and certainly the fingers were slender and marvelously white. On one hand he wore an antique ring, composed of a cameo snakehead set round with diamonds. A proud, gifted, and miserable man was Guy Hartwell, and his characteristic expression of stern sadness might easily have been mistaken by casual observers for bitter misanthropy.

"Guy, there is a messenger waiting at the door to see you. Mr. Vincent requires prompt attendance." Mrs. Chilton stood near the window, and the moonlight flashed over her handsome face.

"Very well." He crossed the room and rang the bell.

"Guy, are you sure that girl has not scarlet fever?"

"May, I have answered that question already."

"But you should sympathize with a mother's anxiety. I dread to expose Pauline to danger."

"Then let her remain where she is."

"But I prefer having her come home, if I could feel assured that girl has only brain fever."

"Then, once for all, there is no scarlet fever in the house."

He took a vial from his pocket, and poured a portion of its contents into the glass, which he placed on a stand by Beulah's bed; then turning to Harriet, who had obeyed his summons, he directed her to administer the medicine hourly.

"Guy, you may give your directions to me, for I shall stay with the child to-night." As she spoke, she seated herself at the foot of the bed."

"Harriet, hand me the candle in the hall." She did so; and, as her master took it from her hand, he said, abruptly:

"Tell Hal to bring my buggy round, and then you may go

to bed. I will ring if you are wanted." He waited until she was out of hearing, and, walking up to his sister, held the candle so that the light fell full upon her face.

"May, can I trust you?"

"Brother, you are cruelly unjust."

"Am I, indeed?"

"Yes, you wrong me hourly with miserable suspicions. Guy, remember that I have your blood in my veins, and it will not always tamely bear insult even from you."

"Insult! May, can the unvarnished truth be such?"

They eyed each other steadily, and it was apparent that each iron will was mated.

"Guy, you shall repent this."

"Perhaps so. You have made me repent many things."

"Do you mean to say that——"

"I mean to say, that since you have at last offered to assist in nursing that unconscious child, I wish you to give the medicine hourly. The last potion was at eight o'clock." He placed the candle so as to shade the light from the sick girl, and left the room. Mrs. Chilton sat for some time as he had left her, with her head leaning on her hand, her thoughts evidently perplexed and bitter. At length she rose and stood close to Beulah, looking earnestly at her emaciated face. She put her fingers on the burning temples and wrist, and counted accurately the pulsations of the lava tide, then bent her queenly head, and listened to the heavily-drawn breathing. A haughty smile lit her fine features as she said, complacently:

"A mere tempest in a teapot. Pshaw, this girl will not mar my projects long. By noon to-morrow she will be in eternity. I thought, the first time I saw her ghostly face, she would trouble me but a short season. What paradoxes men are. What on earth possessed Guy, with his fastidious taste, to bring to his home such an ugly, wasted, sallow little wretch? I verily believe, as a family, we are beset by evil angels." Drawing out her watch, she saw that the hand had passed nine. Raising the glass to her lips, she drank the quantity prescribed for the sufferer, and was replacing it on the stand, when Beulah's large, eloquent eyes startled her.

"Well, child, what do you want?" said she, trembling, despite her assumed indifference. Beulah looked at her vacantly, then threw her arms restlessly over the pillow, and slept again. Mrs. Chilton drew up a chair, seated herself, and sank into a reverie of some length. Ultimately she was aroused by perceiving her brother beside her, and said, hastily:

"How is Mr. Vincent? Not dangerously ill, I hope?"

"To-morrow will decide that. It is now ten minutes past ten; how many potions have you given?"

"Two," answered she, firmly.

"Thank you, May. I will relieve you now. Good-night."

"But you are worn out, and I am not. Let me sit up. I will wake you if any change occurs."

"Thank you, I prefer watching to-night. Take that candle, and leave it on the table in the hall. I need nothing but moonlight. Leave the door open." As the flickering light vanished, he threw himself into the chair beside the bed.

It was in the gray light of dawning day that Beulah awoke to consciousness. For some moments after unclosing her eyes, they wandered inquiringly about the room, and finally rested on the tall form of the watcher, as he stood at the open window. Too feeble even to think, she moaned audibly. Dr. Hartwell turned and looked at her. The room was still in shadow, though the eastern sky was flushed, and he stepped to the bedside. The fever had died out, the cheeks were very pale, and the unnaturally large, sunken eyes lusterless. She looked at him steadily, yet with perfect indifference. He leaned over, and said, eagerly:

"Beulah, do you know me?"

"Yes, I know you."

"How do you feel this morning?"

"I am very weak, and my head seems confused. How long have I been here?"

"No matter, child, if you are better." He took out his watch, and, after counting her pulse, prepared some medicine, and gave her a potion.

He passed his fingers softly over her forehead, and put back the tangled masses of jetty hair, which long neglect had piled about her face. The touch of his cool hand, the low, musical tones of his voice, were very soothing to the weary sufferer, and with a great effort she looked up into the deep, dark eyes, saying brokenly:

"Oh, sir, how good you are! I am—very grateful—to you—indeed, I am——"

"There, my child, do not try to talk, only trust me, and be cheerful. It is a pleasure to me to have you here, and know that you will always remain in my house."

How long he sat there she never knew, for soon she slept, and when, hours after, she waked, the lamp was burning dimly, and only Harriet was in the room. A week passed, and the girl saw no one except the nurse and physician. One sunny afternoon she looped back the white curtains, and sat down before the open window.

She was startled out of a sad reverie by ringing peals of laughter, which seemed to come from the adjoining passage.

The next moment the door was thrown rudely open, and a girl about her own age sprang into the room, quickly followed by Mrs. Chilton.

"Let me alone, mother. I tell you I mean to see her."

The speaker paused in the center of the apartment. Involuntarily Beulah raised her eyes, and met the searching look fixed upon her. The intruder was richly dressed, and her very posture bespoke the lawless independence of a willful, petted child. The figure was faultlessly symmetrical, and her face radiantly beautiful. The features were clearly cut and regular, the eyes of deep, dark violet hue, shaded by curling brown lashes. Her chestnut hair was thrown back with a silver comb, and fell in thick curls below the waist; her complexion was of alabaster clearness, and cheeks and lips wore the coral bloom of health. Her lips parted, and she put out her hand, as if to address Beulah, when Mrs. Chilton exclaimed, impatiently:

"Pauline, come down this instant! Your uncle positively forbade your entering this room until he gave you permission. There is his buggy this minute! Come out, I say!" She laid her hand in no gentle manner on her daughter's arm.

"Oh, sink the buggy! What do I care if he does catch me here? I shall stay till I make up my mind whether that little thing is a ghost or not. So, mother, let me alone."

At this moment Dr. Hartwell appeared on the scene, and, though regretting all the confusion, he hid his annoyance and formally introduced the willful Pauline, his niece, to Beulah, bidding her be kind to his adopted daughter.

Shortly afterwards Beulah was able to be about, and proved herself a willing helper to the doctor. Still she was not happy, for this state of dependence was irksome to her spirit, so she determined to ask Dr. Hartwell to give her an education, which would enable her to repay its price.

CHAPTER V.

THE days passed swiftly. Beulah spent most of her time in her own room, for Dr. Hartwell was sometimes absent all day, and she longed to escape his sister's icy espionage. Monday morning she expected to start to school. Madam St. Cymon's was the fashionable institution of the city, and thither, with Pauline, she was destined. Beulah rose early, dressed herself carefully, and, after reading a chapter in her Bible, and asking God's special guidance through the day, descended to the breakfast-room. Dr. Hartwell sat reading a newspaper; he did not look up, and she quietly seated herself unobserved. Presently Mrs. Chilton entered and walked up to her brother.

"Good-morning, Guy. Are there no tidings of that vessel yet? I hear the Grahams are terribly anxious about it. Cornelia said her father was unable to sleep."

"No news yet, but, May, be sure you do not let——"

"Was it the *Morning Star*? Is he lost?"

Beulah stood crouching at his side, with her hands extended pleadingly, and her white face convulsed.

"My child, do not look so wretched; the vessel that Eugene sailed in was disabled in a storm, and has not yet reached the place of destination. Perhaps at this very moment Eugene may be writing you an account of his voyage. I believe that we shall soon hear of his safe arrival. You need not dive down into my eyes in that way. I do believe it, for the vessel was seen after the storm, and though far out of the right track, there is good reason to suppose she has put into some port to be repaired."

Beulah clasped her hands over her eyes, as if to shut out some horrid phantom, and, while her heart seemed dying on the rack, she resolved not to despair till the certainty came.

"Time enough when there is no hope; I will not go out to meet sorrow." With a sudden, inexplicable revulsion of feeling, she sank on her knees, and there, beside her protector, vehemently prayed Almighty God to guard and guide the tempest-tossed loved one. Dr. Hartwell put his hand on the shoulder of the kneeling girl, and asked, rather abruptly:

"Beulah, do you believe that the God you pray to hears you?"

"I do. He has promised to answer prayer."

"Then get up and be satisfied, and eat your breakfast. You have asked Him to save and protect Eugene, and, according to the Bible, He will certainly do it; so, no more tears. If you believe in your God, what are you looking so wretched about?" There was something in all this that startled Beulah, and she looked up at him. His chilly smile pained her, and she rose quickly, while again and again his words rang in her ear. Yet, what was there so strange about this application of faith? With innate quickness of perception, she detected the tissued veil of irony which the doctor had wrapped about his attempted consolation, and she looked at him so intently, so piercingly, that he hastily turned away and seated himself at the table.

Entering school is always a disagreeable ordeal, and to a sensitive nature, such as Beulah's, it was torturing. Madam St. Cymon was a good-natured, kind, little body, and received her with a warmth which made amends in some degree for the battery of eyes she was forced to encounter.

"Ah, yes! the doctor called to see me about you—wants you to take the Latin course. For the present, my dear, you will sit with Miss Sanders. Clara, take this young lady with you."

The girl addressed looked at least sixteen years of age, and, rising promptly, she came forward and led Beulah to a seat at her desk, which was constructed for two persons.

Clara Sanders was not a beauty in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but there was an expression of angelic sweetness and purity in her countenance which fascinated the orphan. She remarked the scrutiny of the young stranger, and, smiling good-humoredly, said, as she leaned over and arranged the desk:

"I am glad to have you with me, and dare say we shall get on very nicely together. You look ill."

"I have been ill recently, and have not yet regained my strength. Can you tell me where I can find some water? I feel rather faint."

Her companion brought her a glass of water. She drank it eagerly, and, as Clara resumed her seat, said, in a low voice:

"Oh, thank you. You are very kind."

"Not at all. If you feel worse you must let me know." She turned to her books and soon forgot the presence of the newcomer.

The latter watched her, and noticed now that she was dressed in deep mourning; was she, too, an orphan, and had this circumstance rendered her so kindly sympathetic? Soon Clara left her for recitation, and then she turned to the new books which madam had sent to her desk. Thus passed the morning, and she started when the recess bell rang its summons through the long room. Bustle, chatter, and confusion ensued. Pauline called to her to come into the lunchroom, and touched her little basket as she spoke, but Beulah shook her head and kept her seat.

Clara was engaged in drawing, and, looking on, Beulah became interested in the progress of the sketch. Suddenly a hand was placed over the paper, and a tall, handsome girl, with black eyes and sallow complexion, exclaimed sharply:

"For Heaven's sake, Clara Sanders, do you expect to swim into the next world on a piece of drawing-paper? Come over to my seat and work out that eighth problem for me. I have puzzled over it all the morning, and can't get it right."

"I can show you here quite as well." Taking out her Euclid, she found and explained the obstinate problem.

"Thank you. I cannot endure mathematics, but father is bent upon my being 'thorough,' as he calls it. I think it is all thorough nonsense. Now with you it is very different; you expect to be a teacher, and, of course, will have to acquire all these branches; but, for my part, I see no use in it. I shall be rejoiced when this dull school work is over."

"Don't say that, Cornelia; I think our school days are the happiest, and feel sad that mine are numbered."

Here the bell announced recess over, and Cornelia moved away to her seat. A trembling hand sought Clara's arm.

"Is that Cornelia Graham?"

"Yes; is she not very handsome?"

Beulah made no answer; she only remembered that this girl was Eugene's adopted sister; and, looking after the tall, queenly form, she longed to follow her, and ask all the particulars of the storm. Thus ended the first dreaded day at school, and, on reaching home, Beulah threw herself on her bed with a low, wailing cry. The long-pent sorrow must have vent, and she sobbed until weariness sank her into a heavy sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

"CORNELIA GRAHAM, I want to know why you did not come to my party? You might, at least, have honored me with an excuse." Such was Pauline's salutation the following day, when the girls gathered in groups about the schoolroom.

"Why, Pauline, I did send an excuse, but it was addressed to your mother, and probably she forgot to mention it. You must acquit me of any such rudeness."

"Well, but why didn't you come? We had a glorious time. I have half a mind not to tell you what I heard said of you, but I believe you may have it second-hand. Fred Vincent was as grum as a preacher all the evening, and when I asked him what on earth made him so surly and owlish, he said, 'It was too provoking you would not come, for no one else could dance the schottische to his liking.' Now, there was a sweet specimen of manners for you! You had better teach your beau politeness."

Cornelia was about to retort, but madam's voice prevented, as she held out a note, and said:

"Miss Graham, a servant has just brought this for you."

The girl's face flushed and paled alternately as she received the note and broke the seal with trembling fingers. Glancing over the contents, her countenance became irradiated, and she exclaimed, joyfully:

"Good news! the *Morning Star* has arrived at Amsterdam."

Beulah's head went down on her desk, and just audible were the words:

"My Father in heaven, I thank Thee!"

Only Clara and Cornelia heard the broken accents, and they looked curiously at the bowed figure, quivering with joy.

"Ah! I understand; this is the asylum Beulah I have often heard him speak of. I had almost forgotten the circumstance. You know him very well, I suppose?" said Cornelia.

"Yes, I knew him very well." Beulah felt the blood come into her cheeks, and she ill-brooked the cold, searching look bent upon her.

"You are the same girl that he asked my father to send to the public school. How came you here?"

A pair of dark, gray eyes met Cornelia's gaze, and seemed to answer defiantly, "What is it to you?"

"Has Dr. Hartwell adopted you? Pauline said so, but she is so heedless that I scarcely believed her, particularly when it seemed so very improbable."

Cornelia smiled derisively, and turned off, with the parting taunt:

"It is a mystery to me what Eugene can see in such a homely, unpolished specimen. He pities her, I suppose."

Clara felt a long shiver creep over the slight form, and saw the ashen hue that settled on her face, as if some painful wound had been inflicted. Stooping down, she whispered:

"Don't let it trouble you. Cornelia is hasty, but she is generous, too, and will repent her rudeness. She did not intend to pain you; it is only her abrupt way of expressing herself."

Beulah raised her head, and, putting back the locks of hair that had fallen over her brow, replied, coldly:

"It is nothing new; I am accustomed to such treatment. Only, professing to love Eugene, I did not expect her to insult one whom he had commissioned her to assist, or at least sympathize with."

"Remember, Beulah, she is an only child, and her father's idol, and perhaps——"

"The very blessings that surround her should teach her to feel for the unfortunate and unprotected."

The discussion was cut short by a call to recitation, and Beulah sank into a reverie, in which Eugene, and Heidelberg, and long letters mingled pleasingly. Later in the day, as she and Pauline were descending the steps, the door of the primary department of the school opened, and a little girl, clad in deep black, started up the same flight of steps. Seeing the two above, she leaned against the wall, waiting for them to pass. Beulah stood still, and the satchel she carried fell unheeded from her hand, while a thrilling cry broke from the little girl's lips; and, springing up the steps she threw herself into Beulah's arms.

"Dear Beulah! I have found you at last!" She covered the thin face with passionate kisses; then heavy sobs escaped her, and the two wept bitterly together.

"Beulah, I did love her very much; I did not forget what I promised you. She used to put her arms around my neck every night, and go to sleep close to me; and whenever she thought about you and cried, she always put her head in my lap. Indeed, I did love her."

"I believe you, Claudy," poor Beulah groaned.

"They did not tell me she was dead; they said she was sick

in another room! Oh, Beulah! why didn't you come to see us? Why didn't you come? When she was first taken sick, she called for you all the time; and the evening they moved me into the next room, she was asking for you. 'I want my sister Beulah! I want my Beulah!' was the last thing I heard her say; and when I cried for you, too, mamma said we were both crazy with fever. Oh—" she paused and sobbed convulsively. Beulah raised her head, and while the tears dried in her flashing eyes, said, fiercely:

"Claudy, I did go to see you! On my knees, at Mrs. Grayson's front door, I prayed her to let me see you. She refused, and ordered me to come there no more! She would not suffer my sister to know that I was waiting there on my knees to see her dear, angel face. That was long before you were taken sick. She did not even send me word that Lilly was ill; I knew nothing of it till my darling was cold in her little shroud! Oh, Claudy! Claudy!"

She covered her face with her hands and tried to stifle the wail that crossed her lips. Claudia endeavored to soothe her, by winding her arms about her and kissing her repeatedly. Pauline had looked wonderingly on during this painful reunion; and now drawing nearer, she said, with more gentleness than was her custom:

"Don't grieve so, Beulah. Wipe your eyes and come home; those girls yonder are staring at you."

"What business is it of yours?" began Claudia; but Beulah's sensitive nature shrank from observation, and, rising hastily, she took Claudia to her bosom, kissed her, and turned away. On entering the house they encountered the doctor, who was crossing the hall. He stopped, and said:

"I have glad tidings for you, Beulah. The *Morning Star* arrived safely at Amsterdam, and by this time Eugene is at Heidelberg."

Beulah stood very near him, and answered, tremblingly:

"Yes, sir, I heard it at school."

He perceived that something was amiss, and, untying her bonnet, looked searchingly at the sorrow-stained face. She shut her eyes, and leaned her head against him.

"What is the matter, my child? I thought you would be very happy in hearing of Eugene's safety."

She was unable to reply just then; and Pauline, who stood swinging her satchel to and fro, volunteered an explanation.

Her uncle's countenance resumed its habitual severity, and, taking Beulah's hand, he led her into that quietest of all quiet places, his study. Seating himself, and drawing her to his side, he said:

"Was it meeting Claudia that distressed you so much? That child is very warmly attached to you. She raved about

you constantly during her illness. So did Lilly. I did not understand the relationship then, or I should have interfered, and carried you to her. I called to see Mr. and Mrs. Grayson last week, to remove the difficulties in the way of your intercourse with Claudia, but they were not at home. I will arrange matters so that you may be with Claudia as often as possible. You have been wronged, child, I know; but try to bury it; it is all past now."

"No, sir; it never will be past; it will always be burning here in my heart."

"I thought you professed to believe in the Bible."

"I do, sir; I do."

"Then your belief is perfectly worthless; for the Bible charges you to 'forgive and love your enemies,' and here you are trying to fan your hate into an everlasting flame."

She saw the scornful curl of his lips, and, sinking down beside him, she laid her head on his knee, and said, hastily:

"I know it is wrong, sinful, to feel toward Mrs. Grayson as I do. Yes, sir; the Bible tells me it is very sinful; but I have been so miserable, I could not help hating her. But I will try to do so no more. I will ask God to help me forgive her." His face flushed, even to his temples, and then the blood receded, leaving it like sculptured marble. Unable or unwilling to answer, he put his hands on her head, softly, reverently, as though he touched something ethereal. He little dreamed that, even then, that suffering heart was uplifted to the Throne of Grace, praying the Father that she might so live and govern herself that he might come to believe the Bible, which her clear insight too surely told her he despised.

Oh! protean temptation. Even as she knelt, with her protector's hands resting on her brow, ubiquitous evil suggested the thought: "Is he not kinder, and better, than anyone you ever knew? Has not Mrs. Grayson a pew in the most fashionable church? Did not Eugene tell you he saw her there, regularly, every Sunday? Professing Christianity, she injured you; rejecting it, he has guarded and most generously aided you. 'By their fruits ye shall judge.'" Very dimly all this passed through her mind. She was perplexed and troubled at the confused ideas veiling her trust.

"Beulah, put on your other bonnet, and I will give you a short ride. Hurry, child; I don't like to wait."

She was soon seated beside him in the buggy, and Mazeppa's swift feet had borne them some distance from home ere either spoke. The road ran near the bay. Beulah was watching the snowy wall of foam, piled on either side of the prow of a schooner, and thinking how very beautiful it was, when the buggy stopped suddenly, and Dr. Hartwell addressed a gentleman on horseback:

"Percy, you may expect me; I am coming as I promised."

"I was about to remind you of your engagement. But, Guy, whom have you there?"

"My protégée I told you of. Beulah, this is Mr. Lockhart." The rider reined his horse near her side, and, leaning forward as he raised his hat, their eyes met. Both started visibly, and, extending his hand, Mr. Lockhart said, eagerly:

"Ah, my little forest friend! I am truly glad to find you again."

"Pray, Percy, what do you know of her?"

"Why, Guy, she was wandering about the piney woods, near the asylum, with two beautiful elves, when I chanced to meet her. She was singing at the time. Beulah, I am glad to find you out again; and in future, when I pay the doctor long visits, I shall expect you to appear for my entertainment. Look to it, Guy, that she is present. But I am fatigued with my unusual exercise, and must return home. Good-by, Beulah; shake hands. I am going immediately to my room, Guy; so come as soon as you can." He rode slowly on, while Dr. Hartwell shook the reins, and Mazeppa sprang down the road again. Beulah had remarked a great alteration in Mr. Lockhart's appearance. His genial manner had interested her, and, looking up at her guardian, she said, timidly:

"Is he ill, sir?"

"He has been, and is yet quite feeble. Do you like him?"

"I know nothing of him, except that he spoke to me one evening some months ago. Does he live here, sir?"

"No; he has a plantation on the river, but is here on a visit occasionally. Much of his life has been spent in Europe, and thither he goes again very soon."

The sun had set. The bay seemed a vast sheet of fire, as the crimson clouds cast their shifting shadows on its bosom; and, forgetting everything else, Beulah leaned out of the buggy, and said, almost unconsciously:

"How beautiful! how very beautiful!" Her lips were parted, her eyes clear, and sparkling with delight. Dr. Hartwell sighed, and, turning from the bay road, approached his home. Beulah longed to speak to him of what was pressing on her heart, but, glancing at his countenance to see whether it was an auspicious time, she was deterred by the somber sternness which overshadowed it, and, before she could summon courage to speak, they stopped at the front gate:

"Jump out and go home; I have not time to drive in."

She got out of the buggy, and, looking up at him as he rose to adjust some part of the harness, said, bravely:

"I am very much obliged to you for my ride. I have not had such a pleasure for years. I thank you very much."

"All very unnecessary, child. I am glad you enjoyed it."

"Excuse me, sir; but may I wait in your study till you come home? I want to ask you something." Her face flushed, and her voice trembled with embarrassment.

"It may be late before I come home to-night. Can't you tell me now what you want? I can wait."

"Thank you, sir; to-morrow will do as well, I suppose. I will not detain you." She opened the gate and entered the yard. Dr. Hartwell looked after her an instant, and called out, as he drove on:

"Do as you like, Beulah, about waiting for me; of course, the study is free to you at all times."

The walk, or rather carriage road, leading up to the house was bordered by stately poplars and cedars, whose branches interlaced overhead, and formed a perfect arch. Beulah looked up at the dark-green depths among the cedars, and walked on with a feeling of contentment, nay, almost of happiness, which was a stranger to her heart. In front of the house, and in the center of a grassy circle, was a marble basin, from which a fountain ascended. She sat down on the edge of the reservoir, and, taking off her bonnet, gave unrestrained license to her wandering thoughts. Before long, however, she was startled by the sight of several elegantly-dressed ladies emerging from the house. Mrs. Chilton stood on the steps, exchanging smiles and polite nothings, and as one of the party requested permission to break off a sprig of geranium growing near, she gracefully offered to collect a bouquet, adding, as she severed some elegant clusters of heliotrope and jasmine:

"Guy takes inordinate pride in his *parterre*; arranges and overlooks all the flowers himself. I often tell him I am jealous of my beautiful rivals."

"Nonsense! we know, to our cost, that you, of all others, need fear rivalry from no quarter. There, don't break any more. What superb taste the doctor has! I suppose the fascination of his home makes him such a recluse! Why doesn't he visit more? He neglects us shamefully! He is such a favorite in society, too; only I believe everybody is rather afraid of him. I shall make a most desperate effort to charm him, so soon as the opportunity offers. Don't tell him I said so, though, 'forewarned, forearmed.'" All this was very volubly uttered by a dashing, showy young lady, dressed in the extreme of fashion, and bearing unmistakable marks of belonging to *beau monde*.

"I shall not betray your designs, Miss Julia. Guy is a great lover of the beautiful, and I am not aware that anywhere in the book of fate is written the decree that he shall not marry again. Take care, you are tearing your lace point on that rosebush; let me disengage it." She stooped to rescue the

cobweb wrapping, and looking about her, Miss Julia exclaimed:

"Is that you, Pauline? Come and kiss me! Why, you look as unsociable as your uncle, sitting there all alone!"

She extended her hand toward Beulah, who, as may be supposed, made no attempt to approach her. Mrs. Chilton smiled, and, clasping the bracelet on her arm, discovered to her visitor the mistake.

"Pauline is not at home. That is a little beggarly orphan Guy took it into his head to feed and clothe, till some opportunity offered of placing her in a respectable home. I have teased him unmercifully about this display of taste; asked him what rank he assigned her in his catalogue of beautiful treasures." She laughed, as if much amused.

"Oh, that reminds me that I heard some of the schoolgirls say that the doctor had adopted an orphan. I knew it must be a mistake. Come, Julia, remember you are going out to-night, and it is quite late. Do come very soon, my dear Mrs. Chilton." Mrs. Vincent, Miss Julia, and their companions entered the carriage, and were soon out of sight. Beulah still sat at the fountain. As the carriage disappeared, Mrs. Chilton approached her, and, stung to desperation by the merciless taunts, she instantly rose and confronted her.

"What are you doing here, after having been told to keep out of sight?—answer me!" she spoke with the inflexible sternness of a mistress to an offending servant.

"Madam, I am not the miserable beggar you represented me a moment since; nor will I answer questions addressed in any such tone of authority and contempt."

Smiling bitterly, she stooped to pick up her new bonnet, which had fallen on the grass at her feet and, fixing her eyes defiantly on the handsome face before her, said, resolutely:

"No! contemptible as you think me, beggarly and wretched as you please to term me, I have too much self-respect to stay a day longer where I have been so grossly, so needlessly insulted. You need not seek to detain me. Take your hand off my arm; I am going now; the sooner, the better."

Mrs. Chilton was very pale, and her lips were compressed till they grew purple. Clinching her hand, she said:

"You artful little wretch. Am I to be thwarted by such a mere child? You shall not quit the house. Go to your room, and don't make a fool of yourself. In future I shall not concern myself about you, if you take root at the front door. Go in, and let matters stand. I promise you I will not interfere again, no matter what you do. Do you hear me?"

"No. You have neither the power to detain, nor to expel me. I shall leave immediately, and you need not attempt to coerce me; for, if you do, I will acquaint Dr. Hartwell with

the whole affair, as soon as he comes, or when I see him. I am going for my clothes; not those you so reluctantly had made, but the old garments I wore when I worked for my bread." She shook off the detaining hand, and went up to her room, and, taking off the clothes she wore, dressed herself in the humble apparel of former days. The old trunk was scarcely worth keeping, save as a relic; and folding up the clothes and books into as small a bundle as possible, she took it in her arms, and descended the steps. As she crossed the common to the asylum, the friendly stars looked kindly down on the orphan and seemed to whisper words of hope and encouragement.

Mrs. Williams met her at the door of the asylum, wondering what unusual occurrence induced a visitor at this unseasonable hour. The hall lamp shone on her kind but anxious face, and as Beulah looked at her, remembered care and love caused a feeling of suffocation, and, with an exclamation of joy, she threw her arms around her. Astonished at a greeting so unexpected, the matron glanced hurriedly at the face pressed against her bosom, and, recognizing her quondam charge, folded her tenderly to her heart.

"Beulah, dear child, I am so glad to see you!" As she kissed her white cheeks, Beulah felt the tears dropping down upon them.

"Come into my room, dear, and take off your bonnet."

"Mrs. Williams, can I stay with you until I can get a place somewhere? The managers will not object, will they?"

"No, dear, I suppose not. But, Beulah, I thought you had been adopted, just after Lilly died, by Dr. Hartwell? Here I have been, ever since I heard it from some of the managers, thinking how lucky it was for you, and feeling so thankful to God for remembering His orphans. Child, what has happened? Tell me freely, Beulah."

With her head on the matron's shoulder, she imparted enough of what had transpired to explain her leaving her adopted home. Mrs. Williams shook her head, and said, sadly:

"You have been too hasty, child. It was Dr. Hartwell's house; he had taken you to it, and without consulting and telling him, you should not have left it. If you felt that you could not live there in peace with his sister, it was your duty to have told him so, and then decided as to what course you would take."

"Oh, you do not know him! If he knew all that Mrs. Chilton said and did, he would turn her and Pauline out of the house immediately. They are poor, and but for him, could not live without toil. I have no right to cause their ruin. She is his sister, and has a claim on him. I have none. She

expects Pauline to inherit his fortune, and could not bear to think of his adopting me. I don't wonder at that so much. But she need not have been so cruel, so insulting. I don't want his money, or his house, or his elegant furniture. I only want an education, and his advice, and his kind care for a few years. I like Pauline very much—indeed. She never treated me at all unkindly; and I could not bear to bring misfortune on her, she is so happy.”

“That is neither here nor there. He will not hear the truth, of course; and even if he did, he will not suppose you were actuated by any such Christian motive to shield his sister's meanness. You ought to have seen him first.”

“Mrs. Williams, you must promise me that you never will speak of what I have told you regarding that conversation with Mrs. Chilton.”

“I promise you, dear, I never will mention it, since you prefer keeping the matter secret.”

“What will Dr. Hartwell think of me?” was the recurring thought, that would not be banished; and, unable to sleep, Beulah tossed restlessly on her pillow all night, dreading lest he should despise her for her seeming ingratitude.

CHAPTER VII.

For perhaps two hours after Beulah's departure, Mrs. Chilton wandered up and down the parlor, revolving numerous schemes, explanatory of her unexpected exodus. Completely nonplused, for the first time in her life, she sincerely rued the expression of dislike and contempt which had driven the orphan from her adopted home; and, unable to decide on the most plausible solution to be offered her brother, she paced restlessly to and fro. Engrossed by no particularly felicitous reflections, she failed to notice Mazeppa's quick tramp, and remained in ignorance of the doctor's return, until he entered the room, and stood beside her. His manner was hurried, as he said:

“May, I am going into the country to be absent all of tomorrow, and possibly longer. There is some surgical work to be performed for a careless hunter, and I must start immediately. I want you to see that a room is prepared for Percy Lockhart. He is very feeble, and I have invited him to come and stay with me while he is in the city. He rode out this evening, and is worse from fatigue. Can I depend upon you?”

“Certainly; I will exert myself to render his stay here pleasant; make yourself easy on that score.” It was very evi-

dent that the cloud was rapidly lifting from her heart and prospects; but she veiled the sparkle in her eye, and, unsuspecting of anything amiss, her brother left the room.

"Percy Lockhart is vulnerable as well as other people, and I have yet to see the man whose heart will proudly withstand the allurements of flattery, provided the homage is delicately and gracefully offered."

This self-complacent soliloquy was cut short by the appearance of her brother, who carried a case of surgical instruments in his hand.

"May, tell Beulah I am sorry I did not see her. I would go up and wake her, but have not time. She wished to ask me something. Tell her, if it is anything of importance, to do just as she likes; I will see about it when I come home. Be sure you tell her. Good-night; take care of Percy." He turned away, but she exclaimed:

"She is not here, Guy. She asked me this evening if she might spend the night at the asylum. She thought you would not object, and certainly I had no authority to prevent her. Indeed, the parlor was full of company, and I told her she might go if she wished."

His face darkened instantly, and she felt that he was searching her with his piercing eyes.

"All this sounds extremely improbable to me. If she is not at home again at breakfast, take a carriage and go after her. Mind, May! I will sift the whole matter when I come back." He hurried off, and she breathed freely once more. Dr. Hartwell sprang into his buggy, to which a fresh horse had been attached, and drove rapidly off. The gate had been left open for him, and he was passing through when arrested by Harriet's well-known voice.

"Stop, master! Stop a minute?"

"What do you want? I can't stop!" cried he, impatiently.

"Are you going after that poor, motherless child?"

"No. But what the devil is to pay here? I shall get at the truth now. Where is Beulah? Talk fast."

"She is at the asylum to-night, sir. I followed and watched the poor, little thing. Master, if you don't listen to me, if you please, sir, you never will get at the truth, for that child won't tell it. I heard her promise Miss May she would not. You would be ready to fight if you knew all I know."

"Why did Beulah leave here this evening?"

"Because Miss May abused and insulted her; told her before some ladies that she was a 'miserable beggar' that you picked up at the hospital, and that you thought it was charity to feed and clothe her till she was big enough to work. I was sewing at one of the windows upstairs, sir, and heard every word. When the folks were gone, Miss May walks up to her and

asks her what she is doing where anybody could see her. Oh, master! if you could have seen that child's looks. She fairly seemed to rise off her feet, and her face was as white as a corpse. She said she had wanted an education; that she knew you had been very kind; but she never dreamed of taking Miss Pauline's place in your house. She said she would not stay where she was unwelcome; that she was not starving when you took her home; that she knew you were kind and good; but that she scorned—them were the very words, master—she scorned to stay a day longer where she had been so insulted! Oh, she was in a towering rage; she trembled all over, and Miss May began to be scared, for she knew you would not suffer such doings, and she tried to pacify her. But the girl would not hear to anything she said, and told her she need not be frightened, that she wouldn't go to you with the fuss; she would not tell you why she left your house. She went to her room and she got every rag of her old clothes, and left the house with the tears raining out of her eyes. Oh, master, it's a crying shame! If you had only been here to hear that child talk to Miss May! Good Lord! how her big eyes did blaze when she told her she could earn a living!"

"Are you sure she is now at the asylum?"

"Yes, sir; sure."

"Very well; she is safe then for the present. Does anyone know that you heard the conversation?"

"Not a soul, sir, except yourself."

"Keep the matter perfectly quiet till I come home. I shall be away a day; meantime, see that Beulah does not get out of your sight. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir—I do."

The buggy rolled swiftly on, and Harriet returned to the house by a circuitous route, surmising that "Miss May's" eyes might detect her movements.

The same night, Clara Sanders sat on the doorstep of her humble cottage home. The moonlight crept through the clustering honeysuckle and silvered the piazza floor with grotesque fretwork, while it bathed lovingly the sad face of the girlish watcher. Her chin rested in her palms, and the soft eyes were bent anxiously on the countenance of her infirm and aged companion.

"Grandpa, don't look so troubled. I am very sorry, too, about the diploma; but if I am not to have it, why, there is no use in worrying about it. Madam St. Cymon is willing to employ me as I am, and certainly I should feel grateful for her preference, when there are several applicants for the place. She told me that she thought I would find no difficulty in performing what would be required of me."

There was silence for some moments; then the old man rose,

and, putting back the white locks which had fallen over his face, asked, in a subdued tone:

"When will you commence your work?"

"To-morrow, sir."

"God bless you, Clara, and give you strength, as He sees you have need." He kissed her fondly, and withdrew to his own room. She sat for some time looking vacantly at the mosaic of light and shade on the floor before her, and striving to divest her mind of the haunting thought that she was the victim of some unyielding necessity, whose decree had gone forth, and might not be annulled. In early childhood her home had been one of splendid affluence; but reverses came, thick and fast. Discouraged and embittered, her father made the wine-cup the sepulcher of care, and in a few months found a deeper and far more quiet grave. His mercantile embarrassments had dragged his father-in-law to ruin; and, too aged to toil up the steep again, the latter resigned himself to spending the remainder of his days in obscurity, and perhaps want. To Clara's gifted mother he looked for aid and comfort in the clouded evening of life, and with unceasing energy she toiled to shield her father and her child from actual labor. When Clara was about thirteen years of age, a distant relative, chancing to see her, kindly proposed to contribute the sum requisite for affording her every educational advantage. The offer was gratefully accepted by the devoted mother, and Clara was placed at Madam St. Cymon's, where more than ordinary attention could be bestowed on the languages.

The noble woman, whose heart had bled incessantly over the misery, ruin, and degradation of her husband, sank slowly under the intolerable burden of sorrows, and a few weeks previous to the evening of which I write, folded her weary hands and went home to rest. In the springtime of her girlhood, Clara felt herself transformed into a woman. The cousin, residing in a distant State, wrote that pecuniary troubles had assailed him, and prevented all further assistance. In one more year she would have finished the prescribed course and graduated honorably; and more than all, she would have obtained a diploma, which might have been an "open sesame" to any post she aspired to. Thus frustrated in her plans, she gladly accepted the position of assistant teacher in the primary department, which, having become vacant by the dismissal of the incumbent, madam kindly tendered her.

There was a dawning light in Clara's eyes which showed that, although as yet a mere girl in years, she had waked to the consciousness of emotions which belonged to womanhood. She was pretty, and of course she knew it, for I am skeptical of those characters who grow up to mature beauty, all unsuspecting of the fatal dower, and are some day startled by a discovery

of their possessions. She knew, too, that female loveliness was an all-potent spell, and, depressing as were the circumstances of her life and situation, she felt that a brighter lot might be hers without any very remarkable or seemingly inconsistent course of events.

CHAPTER VIII.

"HARRIET, bring me a cup of strong coffee."

Dr. Hartwell had returned late in the afternoon of the second day, and, travel-worn and weary, threw himself down on the sofa in his study. He remained for some time with closed eyes, and, when the coffee was served, drank it without comment. Harriet busied herself about the room, doing various unnecessary things, and wondering why her master did not inquire concerning home affairs; finally, having exhausted every pretext for lingering, she coughed very spasmodically once or twice, and, putting her hand on the knob of the door, said deferentially:

"Do you want anything else, sir? The bathroom is all ready."

"Has my sister been to the asylum?"

"No, sir."

"Go and arrange Beulah's room."

She retired; and, springing up, he paced the floor, striving to master the emotion which so unwontedly agitated him. His lips writhed, and the thin nostrils expanded, but he paused before the melodeon, sat down and played several pieces, and gradually the swollen veins on his brow lost their corded appearance, and the mouth resumed its habitual compression. Then, with an exterior as calm as the repose of death, he took his hat, and went toward the parlor. Mr. Lockhart was reclining on one of the sofas, Pauline sat on an ottoman near him, looking over a book of prints, and Mrs. Chilton, tastefully attired, occupied the piano stool. Witching strains of music greeted her brother as he stopped at the door and looked in. He entered, and, walking up to the invalid, said, cordially:

"How are you, Percy? better, I hope." While one hand clasped his friend's, the other was laid with brotherly freedom on the sick man's head.

"Of course I am. There was no malady in Eden, was there? Verily, Guy, in your delightful home, I am growing well again."

"Ah! so much for not possessing Ithuriel's spear. I am glad to find you free from fever."

"Welcome, Guy! I expected you yesterday; what detained you so long?" Mrs. Chilton approached with outstretched hand, and the same time offered her lips for a kiss.

He availed himself of neither, but, fixing his eyes intently on hers, said as sweetly as if he had been soothing a fretful child:

"Necessity, of course; but now that I have come, I shall make amends, I promise you, for the delay. I have some matters to arrange, and will be with you at tea. May, I wish to see you."

"Well, Guy, what is it?" Without moving an inch, she looked up at him.

"Come to my study," answered her brother, quietly.

"And leave your patient to amuse himself? Really, Guy, you exercise the rites of hospitality so rarely that you forget the ordinary requirements. Apropos, your little protégée has not returned. It seems she did not fancy living here, and prefers staying at the asylum. I would not trouble myself about her, if I were you. Some people cannot appreciate kindness, you know." She uttered this piece of counsel with perfect *sang froid*, and met her brother's eye as innocently as Pauline would have done.

"I am thoroughly acquainted with her objections to this place, and determined to remove them so completely that she cannot refuse to return."

She took his offered arm, and they proceeded to the study in silence.

"Sit down." Dr. Hartwell pushed a chair toward her, and stood looking her fully in the face. She did not shrink, and asked, unconcernedly:

"Well, Guy, to what does all this preamble lead?"

"May, is the doctrine of future punishments laid down as orthodox in that elegantly-gilded prayer book you take with you in your weekly pilgrimage to church?"

"Come, come, Guy; if you have no respect for religion yourself, don't scoff at its observances in my presence. It is very unkind, and I will not allow it." She rose, with an air of offended dignity.

"Scoff! you wrong me. Why, verily, your religion is too formidable to suffer the thought. I tell you, sister mine, your creed is a terrible one in my eyes."

She grew restless under his impaling gaze, and he continued, mockingly:

"From such creeds! such practice! Good Lord, deliver us!"

She turned to go, but his hand fell heavily on her shoulder.

"I am acquainted with all that passed between Beulah and yourself the evening she left my house. I was cognizant of the whole truth before I left the city."

"Artful wretch? She is as false as contemptible!" muttered the sister, through set teeth.

"Take care! do not too hastily apply your own individual standard of action to others. She does not dream that I am acquainted with the truth, though doubtless she wonders that, knowing you so well, I should not suspect it."

"Ah, guided by your favorite Mephistopheles, you wrapped the mantle of invisibility about you, and heard it all! Eh?"

"No; Mephistopheles is not ubiquitous, and I left him at home here, it seems, when I took that child to ride. It is difficult for me to believe you are my sister!—very difficult! It is the most humiliating thought that could possibly be suggested to me. May, I very nearly decided to send you and Pauline out into the world without a dime!—without a cent!—just as I found you, and I may do so yet——"

"You dare not! You dare not! You swore a solemn oath to the dying that you would always provide for us! I am not afraid of your breaking your vow!" cried Mrs. Chilton.

"You give me credit for too much nicety. I tell you I would break my oath to-morrow, nay, to-night—for your duplicity cancels it—but for that orphan you hate so cordially. She would never return if you and Pauline suffered for the past; for her sake, and hers only, I will still assist, support you, for have her here I will, if it cost me life and fortune! I would send you off to the plantation, but there are no educational advantages there for Pauline; and therefore, if Beulah returns, I have resolved to buy and give you a separate home, wherever you may prefer. Stay here, you cannot and shall not!"

"And what construction will the world place on your taking a young girl into your house at the time that I leave it? Guy, with what marvelous foresight you are endowed!" said she, laughing sardonically.

"I shall take measures to prevent any improper construction! Mrs. Watson, the widow of one of my oldest and best friends, has been left in destitute circumstances, and I shall immediately offer her a home here, to take charge of my household, and look after Beulah when I am absent. She is an estimable woman, past fifty years of age, and her character is so irreproachable that her presence here will obviate the objection you have urged. You will decide to-night where you wish to fix your future residence, and let me know to-morrow. Do not imagine that I am ignorant of your schemes! I tell you now, I would gladly see Percy Lockhart lowered into the grave, rather than know that you had succeeded in blinding him! Oh, his noble nature would loathe you, could he see you as you are! There, go! or I shall forget I am talking to a woman—much less a woman claiming to be my sister! Go!

go!" He put up his hands as if unwilling to look at her, and, leaving the room descended to the front door. A large family carriage, drawn by two horses, stood in readiness, and, seating himself within it, he ordered the coachman to drive to the asylum. Mrs. Williams met him at the entrance, and, despite her assumed composure, felt nervous and uncomfortable, for his scrutinizing look disconcerted her.

"Madam, you are the matron of this institution, I presume. I want to see Beulah Benton."

"Sir, she saw your carriage, and begs you will not insist upon seeing her; she does not wish to see you."

"Where is she? I shall not leave the house until I do see her."

She saw from his countenance that it was useless to contend. Secretly pleased at the prospect of reconciliation, the matron no longer hesitated, and, pointing to the staircase, said:

"She is in the first right-hand room."

He mounted the steps, opened the door, and entered. Beulah was standing by the window; she had recognized his step, and knew that he was in the room, but felt as if she would not meet his eye for the universe. He approached, and stood looking at the drooped face; then his soft, cool touch was on her head, and he said, in his peculiar, low, musical tones:

"Proud little spirit, come home and be happy."

She shook her head, saying resolutely:

"I cannot; I have no home. I could not be happy in your house."

"You can be in future. Beulah, I know the whole truth of this matter; how I discovered it is no concern of yours—you have not broken your promise. Now, mark me, I make your return to my house the condition of my sister's pardon. I am not trifling! If you persist in leaving me, I tell you solemnly I will send her and Pauline out into the world to work for their daily bread, as you want to do! If you will come back, I will give them a comfortable home of their own wherever they may prefer to live, and see that they are always well cared for. I want you to come back; I ask you to come with me now. I am lonely; my house is dark and desolate; come, my child, come!" He held her hands in his, and drew her gently toward him. She looked eagerly into his face, and, as she noted the stern sadness that marred its noble beauty, the words of his sister flashed upon her memory: He had been married! Was it the loss of his wife that had so darkened his elegant home?—that gave such austerity to the comparatively youthful face? She gazed into the deep eye till she grew dizzy, and answered, indistinctly:

"Will you always treat Pauline just as kindly as if you had never taken me to your house?"

"Except having a separate home, she shall never know any difference. I promise you this. What else?"

"Will you let me go to the public school instead of Madam St. Cymon's?"

"Why, pray?"

"Because the tuition is free."

"You do not expect to depend on me always, then?"

"No, sir; only till I am able to teach. If you are willing to do this, I shall be glad to go back, very glad; but not unless you are." She looked as firm as her guardian.

"Better stipulate also that you are to wear nothing more expensive than a bit of calico." He seemed much amused.

"Indeed, sir, I am not jesting at all. If you will take care of me while I am educating myself, I shall be very grateful to you; but I am not going to be adopted."

"Very well. Then I will try to take care of you. I have signed your treaty; are you ready to come home?"

"Yes, sir; glad to come."

CHAPTER IX.

THREE years passed swiftly, unmarked by any incidents of interest, and one dreary night in December, Beulah sat in Dr. Hartwell's study, wondering what detained him so much later than usual. The lamp stood on the tea table, and the urn awaited the master's return. The room, with its books, statues, paintings, and melodeon, was unaltered, but time had materially changed the appearance of the orphan. She had grown tall, and the mazarine-blue merino dress fitted the slender form with scrupulous exactness. The luxuriant black hair was combed straight back from the face, and wound into a circular knot, which covered the entire back of the head, and gave a classical outline to the whole. The eyelashes were longer and darker, the complexion had lost its sickly hue, and, though there was no bloom on the cheeks, they were clear and white. Before her lay a book on geometry, and, engrossed by study, she was unobservant of Dr. Hartwell's entrance. Walking up to the grate, he warmed his fingers, and then, with his hands behind him, stood still on the rug regarding his protégée attentively. The colorless face seemed as if chiseled out of ivory, and stern gravity blended with bitterness, was enthroned on the lofty, unfurrowed brow. He looked at the girl intently, as he would have watched a patient to whom he had administered a dubious medicine, and felt some curiosity concerning the result.

"Beulah, put up your book and make the tea, will you?"

She started up, and, seating herself before the urn, said, joyfully:

"Good-evening! I did not know you had come home. You look cold, sir."

"Yes, it is deucedly cold; and, to mend the matter, Mазeppа must needs slip on the ice in the gutter, and lame himself. Knew, too, I should want him again to-night." He drew a chair to the table and received the tea from her hand, for it was one of his whims to dismiss Mrs. Watson and the servants at this meal.

"Who is so ill as to require a second visit to-night?"

"Why, that quiet, little Quaker friend of yours, Clara Sanders, will probably lose her grandfather this time. He had a second paralytic stroke to-day."

"Are any of Clara's friends with her?" asked Beulah.

"Some two or three of the neighbors. What now?"

"I am going to go with you when you return."

"And if I will not carry you?" he answered, questioningly.

"Then, sir, though sorry to disobey you, I shall be forced to walk there."

"So I supposed. You may get ready."

"Thank you." She hurried off to wrap up for the ride, and acquaint Mrs. Watson with the cause of her temporary absence. On reëntering the study she found the doctor lying on the sofa, with one hand over his eyes; without removing it, he tossed a letter to her, saying:

"There is a letter from Heidelberg. I had almost forgotten it. You will have time to read it; the buggy is not ready." He moved his fingers slightly, so as to see her distinctly, while she tore off the envelope and perused it. At first she looked pleased; then her black eyebrows met over the nose, and, as she refolded it, there was a very decided curl in the compressed upper lip. She put it into her pocket without comment.

"Eugene is well, I suppose?" said the doctor.

"Yes, sir, quite well."

"Does he seem to be improving his advantages?"

"I should judge not, from the tone of this letter."

"What does it indicate?"

"That he thinks of settling down into mercantile life on his return; as if he needed to go to Germany to learn to keep books." She spoke hastily and with much chagrin.

"You intend to annihilate that plebeian project of his, then?"

"His own will must govern him, sir; over that I have no power."

"Still you will use your influence in favor of a learned profession?"

"Yes, sir; if I have any."

"Take care your ambitious pride does not ruin you both! Be so good as to give me my fur gauntlets out of the drawer of my desk. That will do; come."

The ride was rather silent. He was to her as inexplicable as ever. She felt that the barrier which divided them, instead of melting away with long and intimate acquaintance, had strengthened and grown impenetrable. Kind but taciturn, she knew little of his opinions on any of the great questions which began to agitate her own mind. For rather more than three years they had spent their evenings together; she in studying; he in reading or writing. Of his past life she knew absolutely nothing, for no unguarded allusion to it ever escaped his lips. As long as she had lived in his house, he had never mentioned his wife's name, and but for his sister's words she would have been utterly ignorant of his marriage. He had most scrupulously avoided all reference to matters of faith; she had endeavored several times to direct the conversation to religious topics, but he adroitly eluded her efforts, and abstained from any such discussion; and though on Sabbath she generally accompanied Mrs. Watson to church, he never alluded to it. She revered and admired him; nay, she loved him; but it was more earnest gratitude than genuine affection. Love casteth out fear, and most certainly she feared him. She had entered her seventeenth year, and feeling that she was no longer a child, her pride sometimes rebelled at the calm, commanding manner he maintained toward her.

They found Clara kneeling beside her insensible grandfather, while two or three middle-aged ladies sat near the hearth, talking in undertones. Beulah put her arm tenderly around her friend ere she was aware of her presence, and the cry of blended woe and gladness with which Clara threw herself on Beulah's bosom told her how well-timed that presence was. Three years of teaching and care had worn the slight young form, and given a troubled, strained, weary look to the fair face. Thin, pale and tearful, she clung to Beulah, and asked, in broken accents, what would become of her when the aged sleeper was no more.

"Our good God remains to you, Clara. I was a shorn lamb, and He tempered the winds for me. I was very miserable, but He did not forsake me."

Clara looked at the tall form of the physician, and while her eyes rested upon him with a species of admiration, she murmured:

"Yes, you have been blessed indeed! You have him. He guards and cares for your happiness, but I, oh, I am alone!"

"You told me he had promised to be your friend. Rest assured he will prove himself such," answered Beulah, watching Clara's countenance as she spoke.

"Yes, I know; but—" She paused, and averted her head, for just then he drew near, and said, gravely:

"Beulah, take Miss Clara to her own room, and persuade her to rest. I shall remain probably all night; at least until some change takes place."

"Don't send me away," pleaded Clara, mournfully.

"Go, Beulah, it is for her own good." She saw that he was unrelenting, and complied without opposition. In the seclusion of her room she indulged in a passionate burst of grief, and thinking it was best thus vented, Beulah paced up and down the floor, listening now to the convulsive sobs, and now to the rain which pelted the window panes. She was two years younger than her companion, yet she felt she was immeasurably stronger. Often during their acquaintance a painful suspicion had crossed her mind; as often she had banished it, but now it haunted her with a pertinacity which she could not subdue. Gradually dim conjecture became sad conviction, and she was conscious of a degree of pain and sorrow for which she could not readily account. If Clara loved Dr. Hartwell, why should it grieve her? Suppose he was double her age; if Clara loved him notwithstanding, what business was it of hers? Besides, no one would dream of the actual disparity in years, for he was a very handsome man, and certainly did not look more than ten years older. Midnight passed; two o'clock came; and then at three a knock startled the watchers. Clara sprang to the door; Dr. Hartwell pointed to the sick room, and said, gently:

"He has ceased to suffer. He is at rest."

She looked at him vacantly an instant, and whispered, under her breath: "He is not dead?"

He did not reply, and with a frightened expression, she glided into the chamber of death, calling piteously on the sleeper to come back and shield her. Beulah would have followed, but the doctor detained her.

"Not yet, child. Not yet."

"Are you going home now, sir?"

"Yes; but you must stay with that poor girl yonder. Can't you prevail on her to come and spend a few days with you?"

"I rather think not," answered Beulah, resolved not to try.

"You look pale, my child. Watching is not good for you. It is a long time since you have seen death. Strange that people will not see it as it is. Passing strange."

"What do you mean?" said she, striving to interpret the smile that wreathed his lips.

"You will not believe if I tell you. 'Life is but the germ of Death, and Death the development of a higher Life.'"

The day which succeeded was very gloomy, and after the funeral rites had been performed, and the second day looked

in, Beulah's heart rejoiced at the prospect of returning home. Clara shrank from the thought of being left alone, the little cottage was so desolate. She would give it up now, of course, and find a cheap boarding-house; but the furniture must be rubbed and sent down to an auction-room, and she dreaded the separation from all the objects which linked her with the past.

"Clara, I have been commissioned to invite you to spend several days with me, until you can select a boarding-house. Dr. Hartwell will be glad to have you come."

"Oh, how good, how noble he is! Beulah, you are lucky, lucky, indeed." She dropped her head on her arms.

"Clara, I believe there is less difference in our positions than you seem to imagine. We are both orphans, and in about a year I, too, shall be a teacher. Dr. Hartwell is my guardian and protector, but he will be a kind friend to you also."

"Beulah, you are mad, to dream of leaving him, and turning teacher! I am older than you, and have traveled over the very track that you are so eager to set out upon. With all your boasted strength, you are but a woman; you have a woman's heart, and one day will be unable to hush its hungry cries."

"Then I will crush it; so help me Heaven!" answered Beulah.

"No; sorrow will do that time enough; no suicidal effort will be necessary." For the first time, Beulah marked an expression of bitterness in the usually gentle, quiet countenance. She was pained more than she chose to evince, and seeing Dr. Hartwell's carriage at the door, prepared to return home.

"Tell him that I am very grateful for his kind offer; that his friendly remembrance is dear to a bereaved orphan. Ah, Beulah! I have known him from my childhood, and he has always been a friend as well as a physician. During my mother's long illness, he watched her carefully and constantly, and when we tendered him the usual recompense for his services, he refused all remuneration, declaring he had only been a friend. He knew we were poor, and could ill afford any expense. Oh, do you wonder that I— Are you going immediately? Come often when I get to a boarding-house. Do, Beulah! I am so desolate; so desolate."

"Yes, I will come as often as I can; and, Clara, do try to cheer up. I can't bear to see you sink down in this way." She kissed the tearful face, and hurried away.

It was Saturday, and retiring to her own room, she answered Eugene's brief letter. Long before she had seen with painful anxiety that he wrote more and more rarely, and while his communications clearly conveyed the impression that he fancied they were essential to her happiness, the protective tender-

ness of early years gave place to a certain commanding, yet condescending tone. More than once she had been troubled by a dawning consciousness of her own superiority, but accustomed for years to look up to him as a sort of infallible guide, she would not admit the suggestion, and tried to keep alive the admiring respect with which she had been wont to defer to his judgment. With the brush of youthful imagination, she had painted him as the future statesman—gifted, popular, and revered; and while visions of his fame and glory flitted before her the promise of sharing all with her was by no means the least fascinating feature in her fancy picture. Of late, however, he had ceased to speak of the choice of a profession, and mentioned vaguely Mr. Graham's wish that he should acquaint himself thoroughly with French, German, and Spanish, in order to facilitate the correspondence of the firm with foreign houses. She felt that once embarked on the sea of mercantile life, he would have little leisure or inclination to pursue the paths which she hoped to travel by his side, and, on this occasion, her letter was longer and more earnest than usual, urging his adherence to the original choice of the law, and using every forcible argument she could adduce. Finally, the reply was sealed and directed, and she went down to the study to place it in the marble receiver which stood on her guardian's desk. Hal, who accompanied the doctor in his round of visits, always took their letters to the post office, and punctually deposited all directed to them in the vase. To her surprise she found no fire in the grate. The blinds were drawn closely, and while she wondered at the aspect of the room, Harriet entered.

"Miss Beulah, do you know how long master expects to be gone? I thought, maybe, you could tell when you came home, for Mrs. Watson does not seem to know any more than I do."

"Gone! What do you mean?"

"Don't you know he has gone up the river to the plantation? Why, I packed his valise at daylight yesterday, and he left in the early morning boat. He has not been to the plantation since just before you came here. Hal says he heard him tell Dr. Asbury to take charge of his patients, that his overseer had to be looked after."

Harriet moved about the room with cheerful alacrity. She had always seemed to consider herself Beulah's special guardian and friend, and gave continued proof of the strength of her affection. Evidently she desired to talk about her master, but Beulah's face gave her no encouragement to proceed. She made several efforts to renew the conversation, but she withdrew, muttering to herself:

"She is learning all his ways. He does hate to talk any more than he can help, and she is patterning after him just

as fast as she can. They don't seem to know what the Lord gave them tongues for."

Beulah practiced perseveringly, for some time, and then drawing a chair near the grate, sat down and leaned her head on her hand. She missed her guardian—wanted to see him—felt surprised at his sudden departure, and mortified that he had not thought her of sufficient consequence to bid adieu to, and be apprised of his intended trip. He treated her precisely as he did when she first entered the house; seemed to consider her a mere child, whereas she knew she was no longer such. He never alluded to her plan of teaching, and when she chanced to mention it, he offered no comment, looked indifferent or abstracted. Though invariably kind, and sometimes humorous, there was an impenetrable reserve respecting himself, his past and future, which was never laid aside. With an ambitious nature, and an eager thirst for knowledge, Beulah had improved her advantages as only those do who have felt the need of them. While she acquired, with unusual ease and rapidity, the branches of learning taught at school, she had availed herself of the extensive and select library to which she had free access, and history, biography, travels, essays and novels had been perused with singular avidity. Dr. Hartwell, without restricting her reading, suggested the propriety of incorporating more of the poetic element in her course. The hint was timely, and induced an acquaintance with the great bards of England and Germany, although her taste led her to select works of another character.

CHAPTER X.

A WEEK later, at the close of a dull winter day, Beulah sat, as usual, in the study. The large parlors and dining-room had a desolate look at all times, and of the whole house, only the study seemed genial. Busily occupied during the day, it was not until evening that she realized her guardian's absence. No tidings of him had been received, and she began to wonder at his prolonged stay. Another Saturday had come, and all day she had been with Clara in her new home, trying to cheer the mourner. At dusk she returned home, spent an hour at the piano, and now walked up and down the study, rapt in thought. The room had a cozy, comfortable aspect; the fire burned brightly; the lamplight silvered the paintings and statues; and on the rug before the grate lay a huge black dog of the St. Bernard order, his shaggy head thrust between his paws.

The great black eyes gazed intently into hers, and seemed

to echo, "when will he come?" He lifted his grim head, snuffed the air, listened, and sullenly dropped his face on his paws again. Beulah threw herself on the rug, and laid her head on his thick neck; he gave a quick, short bark of satisfaction, and very soon both girl and dog were fast asleep. A quarter of an hour glided by, and then Beulah was suddenly roused by a violent motion of her pillow. Charon sprang up, and leaped frantically across the room. The comb which confined her hair had fallen out, and gathering up the jetty folds which swept over her shoulders, she looked around. Dr. Hartwell was closing the door.

"Down, Charon; you ebon scamp! Down, you keeper of Styx!" He forced down the paws from his shoulders, and patted the shaggy head. As he threw down his gloves, his eyes fell on Beulah, who had hastily risen from the rug, and he held out his hand, saying:

"Ah! Charon waked you rudely. How are you?"

"Very well, thank you, sir. I am so glad you have come home; so glad!" She took his cold hand between both hers, rubbed it vigorously, and looked up joyfully in his face. She thought he was paler and more haggard than she had ever seen him; his hair clustered in disorder about his forehead; his whole aspect was weary and wretched.

"Are you well, Beulah? Your face is flushed, and you feel feverish."

"Perfectly well. But you are as cold as an Esquimaux hunter. Come to the fire." She drew his armchair, with its candle stand and book board, close to the hearth, and put his warm, velvet slippers before him. She forgot her wounded pride; forgot that he had left without even bidding her good-by; and only remembered that he had come home again; that he was sitting there in the study, and she would be lonely no more. Silently leaning back in the chair, he closed his eyes with a sigh of relief. She felt as if she would like very much to smooth off the curling hair that lay thick and damp on his white, gleaming brow, but dared not. She stood watching him for a moment, and said, considerably:

"Will you have your tea now? Charon and I had our supper long ago."

"No, child; I only want to rest."

Beulah fancied he spoke impatiently. Had she been too officious in welcoming him to his own home? She bit her lip with proud vexation, and, taking her geometry, left him. As she reached the door, the doctor called to her:

"Sit down, my child; sit down."

Too proud to discover how much she was piqued by his coldness, she took the seat and commenced studying. But lines and angles swam confusedly before her, and, shutting the book,

she sat looking into the fire. While her eyes roamed into the deep, glowing crevices of the coals, a letter was hurled into the fiery mass, and in an instant blazed and shriveled to ashes. She looked up in surprise, and started at the expression of her guardian's face. Its Antinoüs-like beauty had vanished; the pale lips writhed, displaying the faultless teeth; the thin nostrils were expanded, and the eyes burned with fierce anger.

"Idiot! blind lunatic! In his dotage!"

There was something so marvelous in this excited, angry manifestation that Beulah, who had never before seen him other than phlegmatic, looked at him with curious wonder. His clinched hand rested on the arm of the chair, and he continued, sarcastically:

"Oh, a precious pair of idiots! They will have a glorious life. Such harmony, such congeniality! Such incomparable sweetness, on her part; such equable spirits on his! Not the surpassing repose of a windless tropic night can approach to the divine serenity of their future. Ha! by the Furies! he will have an enviable companion; a matchless Griselda!" Laughing scornfully, he started up and strode across the floor. He approached her, and she felt as though her very soul shrank from him; his glowing eyes seemed to burn her face, as he paused and said, ironically:

"Can't you participate in my joy? I have a new brother-in-law. Congratulate me on my sister's marriage. Such desperate good news can come but rarely in a lifetime."

"Whom has she married, sir?" asked Beulah.

"Percy Lockhart, of course. He will rue his madness. I warned him. Now let him seek apples in the orchards of Sodom! Let him lay his parched lips to the treacherous waves of the Dead Sea! Oh, I pity the fool! I tried to save him, but he would seal his own doom. Let him pay the usurious school fees of experience."

"Perhaps your sister's love for him will——"

"Oh, you young, ignorant lamb! You poor, little unfledged birdling! I suppose you fancy she is really attached to him. Do you, indeed? About as much as that pillar of salt in the plain of Sodom was attached to the memory of Lot. About as much as this peerless Niobe of mine is attached to me." He struck the marble statue as he spoke.

"Then, how could she marry him?" asked Beulah, naïvely.

"Ha! ha! I will present you to the Smithsonian Institution as the last embodiment of effete theories. Who exhumed you, patron saint of archism, from the charnelhouse of centuries?" He looked down at her with an expression of intolerable bitterness and scorn. Her habitually pale face flushed to crimson, as she answered, with sparkling eyes:

"Not the hands of Diogenes, encumbered with his tub!"

He smiled grimly.

"Know the world as I do, child, and tubs and palaces will be alike to you. Feel the pulse of humanity."

"Heaven preserve me from looking on life through your spectacles!" cried she, impetuously.

"Amen." Taking his hands from her shoulder, he threw himself back into his chair. There was silence for some minutes, and Beulah said:

"I thought Mr. Lockhart was in Syria?"

"Oh, no; he wants a companion in his jaunt to the Holy Land. How devoutly May will kneel on Olivet and Moriah! What pious tears will stain her lovely cheek as she stands in the hall of Pilate, and calls to mind all the thirty years' history! Oh! Percy is cruel to subject her tender soul to such torturing associations. Beulah, go and play something. Anything to hush my cursing mood. Go, child." He turned away his face to hide its bitterness, and, seating herself at the melodeon, Beulah played a German air, of which he was very fond. At the conclusion, he merely said:

"Sing."

A plaintive prelude followed the command, and she sang. No description could do justice to the magnificent voice, as it swelled deep and full in its organlike tones; now thrillingly low in its wailing melody, and now ringing clear and sweet as silver bells. There were soft, rippling notes, that seemed to echo from the deeps of her soul and voice its immensity. It was wonderful what compass there was; what rare sweetness and purity, too. It was a natural gift, like that conferred on birds. Art could not produce it, but practice and scientific culture had improved and perfected it. For three years the best teachers had instructed her, and she felt that now she was mistress of a spell which, once invoked, might easily exorcise the evil spirit which had taken possession of her guardian. She sang several of his favorite songs, then closed the melodeon, and went back to the fire. Dr. Hartwell's face lay against the purple velvet lining of the chair, and the dark surface gave out the contour with bold distinctness. His eyes were closed, and as Beulah watched him, she thought: "How inflexible he looks, how like a marble image. The mouth seems as if the sculptor's chisel had just carved it; so stern, so stony. Ah! he is not scornful now; he looks only sad, uncomplaining, but very miserable. What has steeled his heart, and made him so unrelenting, so haughty? What can have isolated him so completely? Nature lavished on him every gift which could render him the charm of social circles, yet he lives in the seclusion of his own heart, independent of sympathy, contemptuous of the world he was sent to improve and bless."

CHAPTER XI.

THAT evening Beulah was idly fingering the keys of the piano when Dr. Hartwell entered, with a parcel in one hand and a magnificent cluster of greenhouse flowers in the other. He laid the latter before Beulah, and said:

"I want you to go with me to-night to hear Sontag. The concert commences at eight o'clock, and you have no time to spare. Here are some flowers for your hair; arrange it as you have it now; and here, also, a pair of white gloves. When you are ready, come down and make my tea."

The prospect of hearing Sontag gave her exquisite pleasure, and she dressed with trembling eagerness, while Harriet leaned on the bureau and wondered what would happen next. Except to attend church and visit Clara and Mrs. Williams, Beulah had never gone out before; and the very seclusion in which she lived rendered this occasion one of interest and importance. As she took her cloak and ran downstairs, the young heart throbbed violently.

She poured out the tea with an unsteady hand. Dr. Hartwell scanned her closely, and an expression of satisfaction settled on his features. She wore a dark-blue silk (one he had given her some weeks before), which exquisitely fitted her slender, graceful figure, and was relieved by a lace collar, fastened with a handsome cameo pin, also his gift. The glossy, black hair, was brushed straight back from the face, in accordance with the prevailing style, and wound into a knot at the back of the head. On either side of this knot she wore a superb white camelia, which contrasted well with the raven hair. Her face was pale, but the expression was one of eager expectation. As the carriage rattled up to the door, he put his hand on her shoulder, and said:

"You look very well to-night, my child. Those white japonicas become you." She breathed freely once more.

At the door of the concert hall he gave her his arm, and she clung to him with a feeling of dependence utterly new to her. Everybody knew Dr. Hartwell, and she saw him constantly returning the bows of recognition which assailed him from the ladies in their vicinity. Presently he leaned his head on his hand, and she could not forbear smiling when her attention was attracted by a party which just then took their places immediately in front of her. It consisted of an elderly gentleman and two ladies, one of whom Beulah instantly recognized as Cornelia Graham. She was now a noble-looking, rather than beautiful woman; and the incipient pride, so apparent in girlhood, had matured into almost repulsive *hauteur*. Chancing to look back, she perceived Dr. Hartwell, bowed, and said, with a smile:

"Pray, do not think me obstinate; I had no wish to come, but father insisted."

"I am glad you feel well enough to be here," was his careless reply.

Cornelia's eyes fell upon the quiet figure at his side, and as Beulah met her steady gaze, she felt something of her old dislike warming in her eyes. They had never met since the morning of Cornelia's contemptuous treatment at Madam St. Cymon's; and now, to Beulah's utter astonishment, she deliberately turned round, put out her white-gloved hand, over the back of the seat, and said, energetically:

"How are you, Beulah? You have altered so materially that I scarcely knew you."

Beulah's nature was generous; she was glad to forget old injuries; and as their hands met, she answered:

"You have changed but little."

"And that for the worse, as people have a pleasant way of telling me. Beulah, I want to know, honestly, if my rudeness caused you to leave madam's school?"

"That was not my only reason," replied Beulah.

At this moment a burst of applause greeted the appearance of the cantatrice, and all conversation was suspended. Beulah listened to the warbling of the queen of song with a thrill of delight. Passionately fond of music, she appreciated the brilliant execution and entrancing melody as probably very few in that crowded house could have done. When Sontag left the stage, Beulah looked up, with a long sigh of delight, and murmured:

"Oh, sir! isn't she a glorious woman?"

"Miss Graham is speaking to you," he said, coolly.

She raised her head, and saw the young lady's eyes riveted on her countenance.

"Beulah, when did you hear from Eugene?"

"About three weeks since, I believe."

"We leave for Europe day after to-morrow; shall, perhaps, go directly to Heidelberg. Have you any commissions? any messages?" Under the mask of seeming indifference, she watched Beulah intently, as, shrinking from the cold, searching eyes, the latter replied:

"Thank you, I have neither to trouble you with."

Again the prima donna appeared on the stage, and again Beulah forgot everything but the witching strains. In the midst of one of the songs, she felt her guardian start violently. Following the direction of his gaze, she saw that it was fastened on a gentleman who sat at some little distance from them. His entire appearance was foreign, and conveyed the idea of reckless dissipation. Evidently he came there, not for the music, but to scan the crowd, and his fierce eyes roamed

over the audience with a daring impudence which disgusted her. Suddenly they rested on her own face, wandered to Dr. Hartwell's, and lingering there a full moment, with a look of defiant hatred, returned to her, causing her to shudder at the intensity and freedom of his gaze. But the spell of enchantment was broken; she could hear the deep, irregular breathing of her guardian, and knew, from the way in which he stared down on the floor, that he could, with difficulty, remain quietly in his place. She was glad when the concert ended and the mass of heads began to move toward the door. They were surrounded on all sides by chattering groups, and while the light was too faint to distinguish faces, these words fell on her ear with painful distinctness: "I suppose that was Dr. Hartwell's protégée he had with him. He is a great curiosity. Think of a man of his age and appearance settling down as if he were sixty years old, and adopting a beggarly orphan. She is not at all pretty. What can have possessed him?"

"No, not pretty, exactly; but there is something odd in her appearance. Her brow is magnificent, and I should judge she was intellectual. She is colorless as a ghost. No accounting for Hartwell; ten to one he will marry her. I have heard it surmised that he was educating her for a wife—" Here the party who were in advance vanished, and as he approached the carriage, Dr. Hartwell said, coolly:

"Another specimen of democracy."

Beulah felt as if a lava tide surged madly in her veins, and as the carriage rolled homeward, she covered her face with her hands. Wounded pride, indignation and contempt, struggled violently in her heart. For some moments there was silence; then her guardian drew her hands from her face, held them firmly in his, and said gravely:

"Beulah, malice and envy love lofty marks. Learn, as I have done, to look down with scorn from the summit of indifference upon the feeble darts aimed from the pits beneath you. My child, don't suffer the senseless gossip of the shallow crowd to wound you."

"Oh, sir! you are not invulnerable to these wounds; how, then, can I, an orphan girl, receive them with indifference?"

"Ah! you observed my agitation to-night. But for a vow made to my dying mother, that villain's blood had long since removed all grounds of emotion. Six years ago he fled from me, and his unexpected reappearance to-night excited me more than I had fancied it was possible for anything to do." His voice was as low, calm and musical as though he were reading aloud to her some poetic tale of injuries; and in the same even, quiet tone, he added:

"It is well. All have a Nemesis."

"Not on earth, sir."

"Wait till you have lived as long as I, and you will think with me. Beulah, be careful how you write to Eugene of Cornelia Graham; better not mention her name at all. If she lives to come home again, you will understand me."

"Is not her health good?" asked Beulah, in surprise.

"Far from it. She has a disease of the heart, which may end her existence any moment. I doubt whether she ever returns to America. Mind, I do not wish you to speak of this to anyone. Good-night. If you are up in time in the morning, I wish you would be so good as to cut some of the choicest flowers in the greenhouse, and arrange a handsome bouquet, before breakfast. I want to take it to one of my patients, an old friend of my mother."

CHAPTER XII.

THAT year of study rolled swiftly away; another winter came and passed; another spring hung its verdant drapery over earth, and now ardent summer reigned once more. It was near the noon of a starry July night that Beulah sat in her own room beside her writing desk. To-morrow the session of the public school would close with an examination of its pupils; to-morrow she would graduate, and deliver the valedictory to the graduating class. She had just finished copying her address. Dr. Hartwell had been absent since noon, but now she detected the whirl of wheels in the direction of the carriage house, and knew that he was in the study. She gathered up her hair, which hung loosely about her shoulders, she confined it with a comb, and glided noiselessly down the steps. The lamplight gleamed through the open door, and pausing on the threshold, she asked:

"May I come in for a few minutes, or are you too much fatigued to talk?"

"Beulah, I positively forbade your sitting up this late. It is midnight, child; go to bed."

"Yes, I know; but I want to ask you something."

"Well, what is it?"

"Will you attend the exercises to-morrow?"

"Child, I shall not have leisure."

"Be honest, and say that you have not sufficient interest."

"Have you sent in your name as an applicant for a situation?"

"I have."

"Good-night." His tone was stern, and she immediately retreated. Unable to sleep, she passed the remaining hours of the short night in pacing the floor. The time had come when she must go out into the world, and depend only upon herself;

and though she was anxious to commence the work she had assigned herself, she shrank from the thought of quitting her guardian's home and thus losing the only companionship she really prized. He had not sought to dissuade her; had appeared perfectly indifferent to her plans, and this unconcern had wounded her deeply. Morning dawned, and she hailed it gladly; breakfast came, and she took hers alone; the doctor had already gone out for the day. At ten o'clock the academy was crowded with visitors, and the commissioners and teachers were formidably arrayed on the platform raised for this purpose. The examination began; Greek and Latin classes were carefully questioned, and called on to parse and scan to a tiresome extent; then came mathematical demonstrations. Every conceivable variety of lines and angles adorned the blackboards; and next in succession were classes in rhetoric and natural history. At length, at a signal from the superintendent of the department, Beulah ascended the platform, and, surrounded by men signalized by scholarship and venerable from age, she began her address. She wore a white mull muslin, and her glossy, black hair was arranged with the severe simplicity which characterized her style of dress. Her face was well-nigh as colorless as the paper she held, and her voice faltered with the first few sentences.

The theme was "Female Heroism," and she sought among the dusky annals of the past for instances in confirmation of her predicate, that female intellect was capable of the most exalted attainments. Quitting the fertile fields of history, she painted the trials which hedge woman's path, and with unerring skill defined her peculiar sphere, her true position. The reasoning was singularly forcible, the imagery glowing and gorgeous, and occasional passages of exquisite pathos drew tears from her fascinated audience; while more than once a beautiful burst of enthusiasm was received with flattering applause. As the last words passed her lips, she glanced swiftly over the sea of heads, and perceived her guardian leaning with folded arms against a pillar, while his luminous eyes were fastened on her face. A flash of joy irradiated her countenance, and, bending her head amid the applause of the assembly, she retired to her seat. The crowd slowly dispersed, and beckoned forward once more, Beulah confronted the august committee whose prerogative it was to elect teachers. A certificate was handed her, and the chairman informed her of her election to a vacant post in the intermediate department. The salary was six hundred dollars, to be paid monthly, and her duties would commence with the opening of the next session, after two months' vacation. She bowed in silence, and turned away to collect her books. Her guardian approached, and said, in a low voice:

"Put on your bonnet and come down to the side gate. It is too warm for you to walk home."

Without waiting for her answer, he descended the steps, and she was soon seated beside him in the buggy. The short ride was silent, and, on reaching home, Beulah would have gone immediately to her room, but the doctor called her into the study, and, as he rang the bell, said, gently:

"You look very much exhausted; rest here, while I order a glass of wine."

It was speedily brought, and, having iced it, he held it to her white lips. She drank the contents, and her head sank on the sofa cushions. The fever of excitement was over, a feeling of lassitude stole over her, and she soon lost all consciousness in a heavy sleep. The sun was just setting as she awakened from her slumber. The lamp and her guardian made their appearance at the same moment, and, throwing himself down in one corner of the sofa, the latter asked:

"How are you since your nap? A trifle less ghastly, I see."

"Much better, thank you, sir. My head is quite clear again."

"Clear enough to make out a foreign letter?" He took one from his pocket and put it in her hand.

An anxious look flitted across her face, and she glanced rapidly over the contents, then crumpled the sheet nervously in her fingers.

"What is the matter now?"

"He is coming home. They will all be here in November." She spoke as if bitterly chagrined and disappointed.

"Most people would consider that joyful news," said the doctor, quietly.

"What! after spending more than five years (one of them in traveling), to come back without having acquired a profession, and settle down into a mere walking ledger! To have princely advantages at his command, and yet throw them madly to the winds and be content to plod along the road of mercantile life, without one spark of ambition, when his mental endowments would justify his aspiring to the most exalted political stations in the land?"

"Has it ever occurred to you that you might have overestimated Eugene's abilities?"

"Sir, you entertained a flattering opinion of them when he left here." She could animadvert upon his fickleness, but did not choose that others should enjoy the same privilege.

"I by no means considered him an embryo Webster, or Calhoun; never looked on him as an intellectual prodigy. He had a good mind, a handsome face, and frank, gentlemanly manners, which, in the aggregate, impressed me favorably."

Beulah bit her lips, and stooped to pat Charon's head. There was silence for some moments, and then the doctor asked:

"Does he mention Cornelia's health?"

"Only once, incidentally. I judge from the sentence that she is rather feeble. There is a good deal of unimportant chat about a lady they have met in Florence."

"What is her name?"

"Antoinette Dupres."

Beulah was still caressing Charon, and did not observe the purplish glow which bathed the doctor's face at the mention of the name. She only saw that he rose abruptly, and walked to the window, where he stood until tea was brought in. As they left the table, he held out his hand.

"Beulah, I congratulate you on your signal success to-day. Your valedictory made me proud of my protégée." She had put her hand in his, and looked up in his face, but the cloudy splendor of the eyes was more than she could bear, and dropping her head a little, she answered:

"Thank you."

"Beulah, I think you owe me something for taking care of you, as you phrased it long ago. Do you admit the debt?"

"Most gratefully, sir! I admit that I can never liquidate it; I can repay you only with the most earnest gratitude." Large tears hung upon her lashes, and, with an uncontrollable impulse, she raised his hand to her lips.

"I am about to test the sincerity of your gratitude."

She trembled, and looked at him uneasily. He laid his hand on her shoulder, and said, slowly:

"Relinquish the idea of teaching. Let me present you to society as my adopted child. Thus you can requite the debt."

"I cannot! I cannot!" cried Beulah, firmly.

"Cannot? cannot?" repeated the doctor, pressing heavily upon her shoulders.

"Will not, then!" said she, proudly.

They looked at each other steadily. A withering smile of scorn and bitterness distorted his Apollo-like features, and he pushed her from him, saying, in the deep, concentrated tone of intense disappointment:

"I might have known it. I might have expected it; for fate has always decreed me just such returns."

Leaning against the sculptured Niobe, which stood near, Beulah exclaimed, in a voice of great anguish:

"Oh, Dr. Hartwell! do not make me repent the day I entered this house. You knew that I came here only to be educated. Even then I could not bear the thoughts of always imposing on your generosity; and every day that passed strengthened this impatience of dependence. Through your kindness, it is now in my power to maintain myself, and, after

the opening of next session, I cannot remain longer the recipient of your bounty. Oh, sir, do not charge me with ingratitude! It is more than I can bear; more than I can bear!"

"Mark me, Beulah! Your pride will wreck you; wreck your happiness, your peace of mind. Already its iron hand is crushing your young heart. Beware, lest, in yielding to its decrees, you become the hopeless being a similar course has rendered me. But why should I warn you? Have not my prophecies ever proved Cassandran? Leave me."

"No, I will not leave you in anger." She drew near him, and took his hand in both hers.

"My guardian, would you urge me to remain, when I tell you that I cannot be happy here? I think not."

"Urge you to remain? By the furies, no. I urge you to go! Yes, go. I no longer want you here. Your presence would irritate me beyond measure. But listen to me: I am going to New York on business; had intended taking you with me. I shall start to-morrow evening—rather earlier than I expected—and shall not return before September, perhaps even later. What your plans are, I shall not inquire, but it is my request that you remain in this house, under Mrs. Watson's care, until your school duties commence; then you will, I suppose, remove elsewhere. Remember that in coming years, when trials assail you, if you need a friend, I will still assist you. You will leave me now, if you please, as I have some letters to write." He motioned her away, and, unable to frame any reply, she left the room.

Though utterly miserable, now that her guardian seemed so completely estranged, her proud nature rebelled at his stern dismissal, and a feeling of reckless defiance speedily dried the tears on her cheek. Weary in mind and body, she fell asleep, and soon forgot all her plans and sorrows. The sun was high in the heavens when Harriet waked her, and, starting up, she asked:

"What time is it? How came I to sleep so late?"

"It is eight o'clock. Master ate breakfast an hour ago. Look here, child; what is to pay? Master is going off to the North, to be gone till October. He sat up all night, writing, and giving orders about things on the place. He has not been in such a way since seven years ago. What is in the wind now? What ails him?"

"He told me last night that he expected to leave home this evening; that he was going to New York on business."

"Going this evening! Why, child, he has gone. Told us all good-by, from Mrs. Watson down to Charon. Said his trunk must be sent down to the wharf at three o'clock; that he would not have time to come home again. There, good gracious! you are as white as a sheet; I will fetch you some

wine." She hurried out, and Beulah sank into a chair, stunned by the intelligence.

When Harriet proffered a glass of cordial, she declined it, and said, composedly:

"I will come after a while and take my breakfast. There is no accounting for your master's movements. I would as soon engage to keep up with a comet. There, let go my dress; I am going into the study for a while." She went slowly down the steps, and, locking the door of the study to prevent intrusion, looked around the room. There was an air of confusion, as though books and chairs had been hastily moved about. On the floor lay numerous shreds of crape, and, glancing up, she saw, with surprise, that the portrait had been closely wrapped in a sheet, and suspended with the face to the wall. Instantly an uncontrollable desire seized her to look at that face. She had always supposed it to be his wife's likeness, and longed to gaze upon the features of one whose name her husband had never mentioned. She stood on the marble mantel, and stretched her hands eagerly up; but, though her fingers touched the cord, she could not disengage it from the hook, and, with a sensation of keen disappointment, she was forced to abandon the attempt. A note on the desk attracted her attention; it was directed to her, and contained only a few words:

Accompanying this is a purse containing a hundred dollars. In any emergency which the future may present, do not hesitate to call on
YOUR GUARDIAN.

She laid her head down on his desk, and sobbed bitterly. For the first time she realized that he had, indeed, gone—gone without one word of adieu, one look of kindness or reconciliation. Her tortured heart whispered: "Write him a note; ask him to come home; tell him you will not leave his house." But pride answered: "He is a tyrant; don't be grieved at his indifference; he is nothing to you; go to work boldly, and repay the money you have cost him." Gradually an expression of proud defiance settled on her features; she took the purse, walked up to her room, and put on her bonnet and mantle. Descending to the breakfast-room, she drank a cup of coffee, and, telling Mrs. Watson she would be absent an hour or two, left the house and proceeded to Madam St. Cymon's. She asked to see Miss Sanders, and, after waiting a few minutes in the parlor, Clara made her appearance. She looked wan and weary, but greeted her friend with a gentle smile.

"I heard of your triumph yesterday, Beulah, and most sincerely congratulate you."

"I am in no mood for congratulations just now. Clara, did you not tell me, a few days since, that the music teacher of this establishment was ill, and that Madam St. Cymon was anxious to procure another?"

"Yes, I have no idea she will ever be well again. If strong enough, she is going back to her family, in Philadelphia, next week. Why do you ask?"

"I want to get the situation, and wish you would say to madam that I have called to see her about it. I will wait here till you speak to her."

"Beulah, are you mad? Dr. Hartwell never will consent to your teaching music," cried Clara.

"Dr. Hartwell is not my master, Clara Sanders! Will you speak to madam, or shall I have to do it?"

"Oh, Beulah! you may live to rue your rashness."

To Madam St. Cymon the proposal was singularly opportune. She had given the former teacher six hundred dollars a year, and would allow Miss Benton eighty dollars for the two months. Beulah was agreeably surprised at the ample remuneration, and, having arranged the hours of her attendance at the school, she took leave of the principal. Clara called to her as she reached the street; and assuming a gayety which, just then, was very foreign to her real feelings, Beulah answered:

"It is all arranged. I shall take tea with you in my new home, provided Mrs. Hoyt can give me a room." She kissed her hand, and hurried away. Mrs. Hoyt found no difficulty in providing a room; and, to Beulah's great joy, managed to have a vacant one adjoining Clara's.

It was too warm to walk home again, and Beulah called a carriage. The driver had not proceeded far, when a press of vehicles forced him to pause a few minutes. They happened to stand near the post office, and, as Beulah glanced at the eager crowd collected in front, she started violently on perceiving her guardian. He stood on the corner, talking to a gentleman of venerable aspect, and she saw that he looked harassed. She was powerfully impelled to beckon him to her, and at least obtain a friendly adieu, but again pride prevailed. He had deliberately left her, without saying good-by, and she would not force herself on his notice. Even as she dropped her veil to avoid observation, the carriage rolled on, and she was soon at Dr. Hartwell's door. Unwilling to reflect on the steps she had taken, she busied herself in packing her clothes and books. On every side were tokens of her guardian's constant interest and remembrance; pictures, vases, and all the elegant appendages of a writing-desk. At length the last book was stowed away, and nothing else remained to engage her. The beautiful little Nuremberg clock on the mantle struck

two, and, looking up, she saw the solemn face of Harriet, who was standing in the door.

"What is the meaning of all this commotion? Hall says you ordered the carriage to be ready at five o'clock to take you away from here. Oh, child! what are things coming to? What will master say? What won't he say? What are you quitting this house for, where you have been treated as well as if it belonged to you? What ails you?"

"Nothing. I have always intended to leave here as soon as I was able to support myself. Your master knows I intend to teach."

"Take care, child. Remember, 'Pride goeth before a fall!'"

"What do you mean?" cried Beulah, angrily.

"I mean that the day is coming when you will be glad enough to come back and let my master take care of you! That's what I mean. And see if it doesn't come to pass. But he will not do it then; I tell you now he won't. There is no forgiving spirit about him; he is as fierce and bears malice as long as a Comanche Injun! Anybody would almost believe you belonged to the Hartwell family. Every soul of them is alike in the matter of temper; only Miss Pauline has something of her pa's disposition. I suppose, now her ma is married again, she will want to come back to her uncle; should not wonder if he 'dopted her, since you have got the bit between your teeth."

"I hope he will," answered Beulah.

"We shall see; we shall see!" and Harriet walked off with anything but a placid expression of countenance, while Beulah sought Mrs. Watson to explain her sudden departure. The housekeeper endeavored most earnestly to dissuade her from taking the contemplated step, but her arguments produced no effect, and, with tears of regret, she bade her farewell.

The sun was setting when Beulah took possession of her room at Mrs. Hoyt's house. The furniture was very plain, and the want of several articles vividly recalled the luxurious home she had abandoned.

An undefinable feeling of desolation crept into her heart; but she struggled desperately against it, and asked, in proud defiance of her own nature:

"Am I not sufficient unto myself? Leaning only on myself, what more should I want? Nothing! His sympathy is utterly unnecessary."

A knock at the door startled her, and, in answer to her "come in," Clara Sanders entered. She walked slowly, and, seating herself beside Beulah, said, in a gentle tone:

"How do you like your room? I am so glad it opens into mine."

"Quite as well as I expected. The view from this window

must be very fine. There is the tea-bell, I suppose. Are you not going down? I am too much fatigued to move."

"No; I never want supper, and generally spend the evenings in my room. It is drearily monotonous here. Beulah, how long does Dr. Hartwell expect to remain at the North? He told me, some time ago, that he was a delegate to the medical convention."

"I believe it is rather uncertain; but probably he will not return before October."

"The Grahams are coming home soon, I hear. One of the principal upholsterers boards here, and he mentioned this morning at breakfast that he had received a letter from Mr. Graham, directing him to attend to the unpacking of an entirely new set of furniture. Everything will be on a grand scale. I suppose Eugene returns with them?"

"Yes, they will all arrive in November."

"It must be a delightful anticipation for you."

"Why so, pray?"

"Why? Because you and Eugene are such old friends."

"Oh, yes; as far as Eugene is concerned, of course it is a very pleasant anticipation."

"He is identified with the Grahams."

"Not necessarily," answered Beulah, coldly.

A sad smile flitted over Clara's sweet face, as she rose and kissed her friend's brow, saying gently:

"Good-night, dear. I have a headache, and must try to sleep it off. Since you have determined to battle with difficulties, I am very glad to have you here with me. I earnestly hope that success may crown your efforts, and the sunshine of happiness dispel for you the shadows that have fallen thick about my pathway. You have been rash, Beulah, and short-sighted; but I trust that all will prove for the best. Good-night."

She glided away, and, locking the door, Beulah returned to her seat, and laid her head wearily down on the window-sill. What a Hermes is thought! Like a vanishing dream fled the consciousness of surrounding objects, and she was with Eugene. There had long existed a tacit compact, which led her to consider her future indissolubly linked with his; and his parting words seemed to seal this compact as holy and binding, when he declared: "I mean, of course, to take care of you myself, when I come home, for you know you belong to me." His letters for many months retained the tone of dictatorship, but the tenderness seemed all to have melted away. He wrote as if with a heart preoccupied by weightier matters, and now Beulah could no longer conceal from herself the painful fact that the man was far different from the boy. She wished beyond all expression to see him once more, and the prospect

of a speedy reunion often made her heart throb painfully. That he would reproach her for her obstinate resolution of teaching, she was prepared to expect; but, strong in the consciousness of duty, she committed herself to the care of a merciful God, and soon slept as soundly as though under Dr. Hartwell's roof.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOMETIMES, after sitting for five consecutive hours at the piano, guiding the clumsy fingers of tyros, and listening to a tiresome round of scales and exercises, Beulah felt exhausted, mentally and physically, and feared that she had miserably overrated her powers of endurance. The long, warm days of August dragged heavily by, and each night she felt grateful that the summer was one day nearer its grave. One afternoon she proposed to Clara to extend their walk to the home of her guardian, and they left the noise and crowd of the city, and soon found themselves on the common.

"This is my birthday," said Beulah, as they passed a clump of pines, and caught a glimpse of the white gate beyond.

"Ah! how old are you?"

"Eighteen—but I feel much older."

She opened the gate, and as they leisurely ascended the avenue of aged cedars, Beulah felt once more as if she were going home. A fierce bark greeted her, and the next moment Charon rushed to meet her; placing his huge paws on her shoulders, and whining and barking joyfully. He bounded before her to the steps, and laid down contentedly on the piazza. Harriet's turbaned head appeared at the entrance, and a smile of welcome lighted up her ebony face, as she shook Beulah's hand.

Mrs. Watson was absent, and, after a few questions, Beulah entered the study, saying:

"I want some books, Harriet; and Miss Sanders wishes to see the paintings."

Ah! every chair and bookshelf greeted her like dear friends, and she bent down over some volumes to hide the tears that sprang into her eyes. Clara was eagerly examining the paintings, and neither of the girls observed Harriet's entrance, until she asked:

"Do you know that the yellow fever has broke out here?"

"Oh, you are mistaken! It can't be possible!" cried Clara.

"I tell you it is a fact. There are six cases now at the hospital; Hal was there this morning."

"Who told you there was yellow fever at the hospital?"

"Dr. Asbury said so; and, what is more, Hal has had it

himself, and nursed people who had it; and he says it is the worst sort of yellow fever."

"I am not afraid of it," said Beulah.

"I am dreadfully afraid of it," answered Clara.

The ensuing week was one of anxious apprehension to all within the city. Harriet's words seemed prophetic. In ten days the epidemic began to make fearful havoc; all classes and ages were assailed indiscriminately. Whole families were stricken down in a day, and not one member spared to aid the others. Many doubted that it was yellow fever, and conjectured that the veritable plague had crossed the ocean. Of all Mrs. Hoyt's boarders, but half a dozen determined to hazard remaining in the infected region; these were Beulah, Clara, and four gentlemen. Gladly would Clara have fled to a place of safety, had it been in her power; but there was no one to accompany or watch over her, and, as she was forced to witness the horrors of the season, a sort of despair seemed to nerve her trembling frame. Mrs. Watson had been among the first to leave the city. Madam St. Cymon had disbanded her school; and as only her three daughters continued to take music lessons, Beulah had ample leisure to contemplate the distressing scenes which surrounded her. At noon, one September day, she stood at the open window of her room. Out of her ten fellow-graduates, four slept in the cemetery. The night before she had watched beside another, and at dawn saw the limbs stiffen and the eyes grow sightless. Among her former schoolmates the contagion had been particularly fatal, and fearless of danger, she had nursed two of them. As she stood fanning herself, Clara entered hurriedly, and, sinking into a chair, exclaimed, in accents of terror:

"It has come! as I knew it would! Two of Mrs. Hoyt's children have been taken, and, I believe, one of the waiters also! Merciful God! what will become of me?" Her teeth chattered, and she trembled from head to foot.

"Don't be alarmed, Clara! Your excessive terror is your greatest danger. If you would escape, you must keep as quiet as possible."

She poured out a glass of water, and made her drink it; then asked:

"Can Mrs. Hoyt get medical aid?"

"No; she has sent for every doctor in town, and not one has come."

"Then I will go down and assist her." Beulah turned toward the door, but Clara caught her dress.

"Are you mad, thus continually to put your life in jeopardy? Are you shod with immortality, that you thrust yourself into the very path of destruction?"

"I am not afraid of the fever, and therefore think I shall

not take it. As long as I am able to be up, I shall do all that I can to relieve the sick. Remember, Clara, nurses are not to be had now for any sum." She glided down the steps, and found the terrified mother wringing her hands helplessly over the stricken ones. The children were crying on the bed, and, with the energy which the danger demanded, Beulah speedily ordered the mustard baths, and administered the remedies she had seen prescribed on previous occasions. The fever rose rapidly, and, undaunted by thoughts of personal danger, she took her place beside the bed. It was past midnight when Dr. Asbury came; exhausted and haggard from unremitting toil and vigils, he looked several years older than when she had last seen him. He started on perceiving her perilous post, and said, anxiously:

"Oh, you are rash! very rash! What would Hartwell say? What will he think when he comes?"

"Comes! Surely you have not urged him to come back now!" said she, grasping his arm convulsively.

"Certainly. I telegraphed to him to come home by express. You need not look so troubled; he has had this Egyptian plague, will run no risk, and, even if he should, will return as soon as possible."

All this was said in an undertone, and, after advising everything that could possibly be done, he left the room, beckoning Beulah after him. She followed, and he said, earnestly:

"Child, I tremble for you. Why did you leave Hartwell's house, and incur all this peril? Beulah, though it is nobly unselfish in you to devote yourself to the sick, as you are doing, it may cost you your life—nay, most probably it will."

"I have thought of it all, sir, and determined to do my duty."

"Then God preserve you. Those children have been taken violently; watch them closely; good nursing is worth all the apothecary shops. You need not send for me any more; I am out constantly; whenever I can I will come; meantime, depend only on the nursing. Should you be taken yourself, let me know at once; do not fail. A word more—keep yourself well stimulated."

He hurried away, and she returned to the sick room, to speculate on the probability of soon meeting her guardian. Who can tell how dreary were the days and nights that followed? Mrs. Hoyt took the fever, and mother and children moaned together. On the morning of the fourth day, the eldest child, a girl of eight years, died, with Beulah's hand grasped in hers. Happily, the mother was unconscious, and the little corpse was borne into an adjoining room. Beulah shrank from the task which she felt, for the first time in her life, called on to perform. She could nurse the living, but

dreaded the thought of shrouding the dead. Still, there was no one else to do it, and she bravely conquered her repugnance, and clad the young sleeper for the tomb. Mrs. Hoyt still hung upon the confines of eternity; and Beulah, who had not closed her eyes for many nights, was leaning over the bed, counting the rushing pulse, when a rapid step caused her to look up, and, falling forward in her arms, Clara cried:

"Save me! save me! The chill is on me now!"

It was too true; and as Beulah assisted her to her room, and carefully bathed her feet, her heart was heavy with dire dread lest Clara's horror of the disease should augment its ravages. Dr. Asbury was summoned with all haste, but, as usual, seemed an age in coming, and when at last he came, could only prescribe what had already been done.

"Doctor, you must send Hal to me. He can nurse Mrs. Hoyt and little Willie while I watch Clara. I can't possibly take care of all three, though Willie is a great deal better. Can you send him at once? he is a good nurse."

"Yes, he has been nursing poor Tom Hamil, but he died about an hour ago, and Hal is released. I look for Hartwell hourly. You do keep up amazingly! Bless you, Beulah!"

Reëntering the room, Beulah sat down beside Clara, and, taking one burning hand in her cool palms, pressed it softly, saying, in an encouraging tone:

"I feel so much relieved about Willie, he is a great deal better; and I think Mrs. Hoyt's fever is abating. You were not taken so severely as Willie, and if you will go to sleep quietly, I believe you will only have a light attack."

"What was that the doctor said about Dr. Hartwell?"

"Only that he is coming home soon—that was all."

Clara closed her eyes, but tears stole from beneath the lashes, and coursed rapidly down her glowing cheeks. Beulah felt that her continued vigils and exertions were exhausting her. Her limbs trembled when she walked, and there was a dull pain in her head, which she could not banish. Occasionally she stole away to see the other sufferers, fearing that when Mrs. Hoyt discovered Lizzie's death, the painful intelligence would seal her own fate. It was late at night. She had just returned from one of these hasty visits, and, finding that Hal was as attentive as anyone could be, she threw herself, weary and anxious, into an armchair beside Clara's bed. The victim was delirious; the hazel eyes, inflamed and vacant, rested on Beulah's countenance, and she murmured:

"He will never know! Oh, no! how should he? The grave will soon shut me in, and I shall see him no more—no more!" She shuddered and turned away.

Beulah leaned her head against the bed, and as a tear slid down upon her hand, she said with bitter sorrow:

"I would rather see her the victim of death, than have her drag out an aimless, cheerless existence, rendered joyless by this hopeless attachment!"

A touch on her shoulder caused her to look around, and her eyes rested on her guardian. She started, but did not speak, and held out her hand. He looked at her, long and searchingly; his lip trembled, and instead of taking her offered hand, he passed his arm around her, and drew her to his bosom. She looked up with surprise; and bending his haughty head, he kissed her pale brow, for the first time. She felt then that she would like to throw her arms around his neck, and tell him how very glad she was to see him again—how unhappy his sudden departure had made her; but a feeling she could not pause to analyze prevented her from following the dictates of her heart; and holding her off, so as to scan her countenance, Dr. Hartwell said:

"How worn and haggard you look! Oh, child! your rash obstinacy has tortured me beyond expression."

"I have but done my duty. It has been a horrible time. I am glad you have come."

"It is no wonder you look as if years had suddenly passed over your head! You have a room here, I believe. Go to it, and go to sleep; I will not leave Clara."

It was astonishing how his presence removed the dread weight of responsibility from her heart. Not until this moment had she felt as if she could possibly sleep.

"I will sleep now, so as to refreshed for to-morrow and to-morrow night. Here is a couch; I will sleep here, and if Clara grows worse you must wake me." She crossed the room, threw herself on the couch, and laid her aching head on her arm. Dr. Hartwell placed a pillow under her head; once more his fingers sought her wrist; once more his lips touched her forehead, and as he turned to watch beside Clara, and listen to her ravings, Beulah sank into a heavy, dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHE was awakened by the cool pattering of raindrops, which beat through the shutters and fell upon her face. She sprang up with a thrill of delight, and looked out. A leaden sky lowered over the city, and, as the torrents came down in whitening sheets, the thunder rolled continuously overhead. Not the shower which gathered and fell around sea-girt Carmel was more gratefully received.

"Thank God! it rains!" cried Beulah, and, turning toward Clara, she saw with pain that the sufferer was all unconscious

of the tardy blessing. Save the sound of her labored breathing, the room was silent, and, sinking on her knees, Beulah prayed earnestly that the gentle sufferer might be spared. As she rose, her guardian entered, and she started at the haggard, wasted, harassed look of the noble face which she had not observed before. He bent down and coaxed Clara to take a spoonful of medicine, and Beulah asked, earnestly:

"Have you been ill, sir?"

"No."

He did not even glance at her.

"You are not going, surely?" she continued, as he took his hat and glanced at his watch.

"I am needed elsewhere. Only nursing can now avail here. You know very well what is requisite. Either Dr. Asbury or I will be here again to-night to sit up with this gentle girl."

"You need neither of you come to sit up with her. I will do that myself. I shall not sleep another moment until I know that she is better."

"Very well." He left the room immediately.

"How he cases his volcanic nature in ice!" thought Beulah, sinking into the armchair. "Last night he seemed so kind, so cordial, so much my friend and guardian! To-day there is a mighty barrier, as though he stood on some towering crag, and talked to me across an infinite gulf! Well, well, even an Arctic night passes away; and I can afford to wait till his humor changes."

The sufferer slept, and the watcher augured favorably. About nine o'clock she heard steps on the stairs, and soon after Drs. Asbury and Hartwell entered together. There was little to be told, and less to be advised, and while the latter attentively examined the pulse, the former took Beulah's hands in both his, and said, kindly:

"Are you able to sit up with Miss Sanders to-night? If not, say so candidly."

"I am able, and determined to do so."

"Very well. After to-morrow it will not be needed."

"What do you mean?" cried Beulah, clutching his arm.

"Don't look so savage, child. She will either be convalescent, or beyond all aid. I hope and believe the former. Watch her closely till I see you again. Good-night, dear child." He stepped to the door; and with a slight inclination of his head, Dr. Hartwell followed him.

It was a vigil Beulah never forgot. The night seemed interminable, as if the car of time were driven backward, and she longed inexpressibly for the dawning of day. Four o'clock came at last; Clara slept. The distant stars looked down encouragingly from their homes of blue, and once more the lonely orphan bent her knee in supplication before the throne of Je-

hovah. But a cloud seemed hovering between her heart and the presence-chamber of Deity. In vain she prayed, and tried to believe that life would be spared in answer to her petitions. Faith died in her soul, and she sat with her eyes riveted upon the face of her friend. For several hours longer she maintained her watch; still, the doctor did not come, and while she sat with Clara's fingers clasped in hers, the brown eyes opened, and looked dreamily at her. She leaned over, and, kissing the wan cheek, asked, eagerly:

"How do you feel, darling!"

"Perfectly weak and helpless."

"Have I been very ill?"

"Well—yes. You have been right sick. Had some fever, but it has left you."

Clara mused again. Memory came back slowly, and at length she asked:

"Have I had any physician?"

"Dr. Hartwell came home since you were taken sick, and called to see you two or three times."

A faint glow tinged the sallow cheek, and, while a tremor crept over her lips, she said, almost inaudibly:

"When will he come again?"

"Before long, I dare say. Indeed, there is his step now. Dr. Asbury is with him."

She had not time to say more, for they came in immediately, and with a species of pity she noted the smile of pleasure which curved Clara's mouth, as her guardian bent down and spoke to her. While he took her thin hand and fixed his eyes on her face, Dr. Asbury looked over his shoulder, and said, bluntly:

"Hurrah for you! All right again, as I thought you would be! Does your head ache at all this morning? Feel like eating half-a-dozen partridges?"

"She is not deaf," said Dr. Hartwell, rather shortly.

"I am not so sure of that; she has been to all my questions lately. I must see about Carter, below. Beulah, child, you look the worse for your apprenticeship to our profession."

"So do you, sir," said she, smiling.

He hurried away to another part of the house, and Beulah went into her own apartment to arrange her hair.

Looking into the glass, she could not forbear smiling at the face which looked back at her, it was so thin and ghastly; even the lips were colorless, and the large eyes sunken. She unbound her hair, and had only shaken it fully out, when a knock at her door called her from the glass. She tossed her hair all back, and it hung like an inky veil almost to the floor as she opened the door and confronted her guardian.

"Here is some medicine, which must be mixed in a tumbler

of water. I want a tablespoonful given every hour, unless Clara is asleep. Keep everything quiet."

"Is that all?" said Beulah, coolly.

"That is all." He walked off, and she brushed and twisted up her hair, wondering how long he meant to keep up that freezing manner. It accorded very well with his treatment before his departure for the North, and she sighed as she recalled the brief hour of cordiality which followed his return. She began to perceive that this was the way they were to meet in future; she had displeased him, and he intended that she should feel it. Tears gathered in her eyes, but she drove them scornfully back, and exclaimed:

"He wants to rule me with a rod of iron, because I am indebted to him for an education and support for several years. I will repay him every cent he has expended for music, drawing and clothing! I will economize until every picayune is returned."

The purse had not been touched, and hastily counting the contents, to see that all the bills were there, she relocked the drawer, and returned to the sick room with anything but a calm face. Clara seemed to be asleep, and, picking up a book, Beulah began to read. Toward evening, Clara seemed much refreshed by a long nap, and took some food which had been prepared for her.

"The sickness is abating, is it not, Beulah?"

"Yes, very perceptibly; but more from lack of fresh victims than anything else. I hope we shall have a white frost soon."

"It has been very horrible! I shudder when I think of it."

"Then don't think of it," answered her companion.

"Oh! how can I help it? I did not expect to live through it. You have saved me, dear Beulah!" Tears glistened in her soft eyes.

"No; God saved you."

"Through your instrumentality," replied Clara, raising her friend's hand to her lips.

"Don't talk any more; the doctor expressly enjoined quiet for you."

"I am glad to owe my recovery to him also. How noble and good he is—how superior to everybody else!" murmured the sick girl.

Beulah's lips became singularly compact, but she offered no comment. She walked up and down the room, although so worn out that she could scarcely keep herself erect. When the doctor came, she escaped unobserved to her room, hastily put on her bonnet, and ran down the steps for a short walk. The sun went down, and, too weary to extend her ramble, she slowly retraced her steps. The buggy no longer stood at the

door, and, after seeing Mrs. Hoyt and trying to chat pleasantly, she crept back to Clara.

"How do you feel to-night?" asked Beulah.

"Better, but very weak. You have no idea how feeble I am. Beulah, I want to know whether——"

"You were told to keep quiet, so don't ask any questions, for I will not answer one."

"You are not to sit up to-night; the doctor said I would not require it."

"Let the doctor go back to the North and theorize in his medical conventions! I shall sleep here by your bed, on this couch. If you feel worse, call me. Now, good-night; and don't open your lips again." She drew the couch close to the bed, and, shading the lamp, threw her weary frame down to rest; ere long, she slept. The pestilential storm had spent its fury. The streets resumed their usual busy aspect, and the hum of life went forward once more. At length, fugitive families ventured home again; and though bands of crape, grim badges of bereavement, met the eye on all sides, all rejoiced that Death had removed his court; that his hideous carnival was over. Clara regained her strength very slowly; and when well enough to quit her room, walked with the slow, uncertain step of feebleness.

CHAPTER XV.

It was the middle of November, and absentees, who had spent their summer at the North, were all at home again. Among these were Mrs. Asbury and her two daughters; and only a few days after their return, they called to see Beulah. Ere long, there came a friendly note, requesting her to spend the evening with them; and thus, before she had known them many weeks, Beulah found herself established on the familiar footing of an old friend. Universally esteemed and respected, Dr. Asbury's society was sought by the most refined circle of the city, and his house was a favorite resort for the intellectual men and woman of the community. Mrs. Asbury merited the elevated position which she so ably filled, as the wife of such a man. While due attention was given to the education and rearing of her daughters, she admirably discharged the claims of society, and, by a consistent adherence to the principles of the religion she professed, checked by every means within her power the frivolous excesses and dangerous extremes which prevailed throughout the fashionable circle in which she moved. Her parlors were not the favorite rendezvous where gossips met to retail slander. Refined, dignified,

gentle, and hospitable, she was a woman too rarely, alas! met with in so-called fashionable circles. Her husband's reputation secured them the acquaintance of all distinguished strangers, and made their house a great center of attraction. Beulah fully enjoyed and appreciated the friendship thus tendered her, and soon looked upon Dr. Asbury and his noble wife as counselors to whom in any emergency she could unhesitatingly apply. They treated her as an equal in intrinsic worth, and prized her as a friend. Helen Asbury was older than Beulah, and Georgia somewhat younger. They were sweet-tempered, gay girls, lacking their parents' intellectual traits, but sufficiently well-informed and cultivated to constitute them agreeable companions. Beulah found her school duties far less irksome than she had expected, for she loved children, and soon became interested in the individual members of her classes. From eight o'clock until three she was closely occupied; then the labors of the day were over, and she spent her evenings much as she had been wont ere the opening of the session. Thus November glided quickly away, and the first of December greeted her ere she dreamed of its approach. The Grahams had not returned, though daily expected; and notwithstanding two months had elapsed without Eugene's writing, she looked forward with intense pleasure to his expected arrival. There was one source of constant pain for her in Dr. Hartwell's continued and complete estrangement. Except a cold, formal bow, in passing, there was no intercourse whatever; and she sorrowed bitterly over this seeming indifference in one to whom she owed so much and was so warmly attached. Remotely connected with this cause of disquiet was the painful change in Clara. Like a lily suddenly transplanted to some arid spot, she had seemed to droop. Gentle, but hopeless and depressed, she went, day after day, to her duties at Madam St. Cymon's school, and returned at night wearied, silent and wan. Often Beulah gave up her music and books, and devoted the evenings to entertaining and interesting her; but there was a constraint and reserve about her which could not be removed.

One evening, on returning from a walk with Helen Asbury, Beulah ran into her friend's room with a cluster of flowers. Clara sat by the fire, with a piece of needlework in her hand; she looked listless and sad. Beulah threw the bright golden and crimson chrysanthemums in her lap, and, stooping down, kissed her warmly, saying:

"My dear Clara, what saddens you to-night?"

A hasty knock at the door gave no time for an answer. A servant looked in.

"Is Miss Beulah Benton here? There is a gentleman in the parlor to see her; here is his card."

Beulah still knelt on the floor, and held out her hand indifferently. The card was given, and she sprang up with a cry of joy.

"Oh, it is Eugene!"

At the door of the parlor she paused, and pressed her hand tightly to her bounding heart. A tall form stood before the grate, and a glance discovered to her a dark mustache and heavy beard; still it must be Eugene, and, extending her arms unconsciously, she exclaimed:

"Eugene! Eugene! have you come at last?"

He started, looked up, and hastened toward her. Her arms suddenly dropped to her side, and only their hands met in a firm, tight clasp. For a moment they gazed at each other in silence, each noting the changes which time had wrought. Then he said, slowly:

"I should not have known you, Beulah. You have altered surprisingly." His eyes wandered wonderingly over her features. She was pale and breathless; her lips trembled violently, and there was a strange gleam in her large, eager eyes. She did not reply, but stood looking up intently into his handsome face. Then she shivered; the long, black lashes drooped; her white fingers relaxed their clasp of his, and she sat down on the sofa near. Ah! her womanly intuitions, infallible as Ithuriel's spear, told her that he was no longer the Eugene she had loved so devotedly. An iron hand seemed to clutch her heart, and again a shudder crept over her as he seated himself beside her, saying:

"I am very much pained to find you here. I am just from Dr. Hartwell's, where I expected to see you."

He paused, for something about her face rather disconcerted him, and he took her hand again in his.

"I should scorn myself were I willing to live idly on the bounty of one upon whom I have no claim."

"You are morbidly fastidious, Beulah."

Her eyes flashed, and, snatching her hand from his, she asked, with curling lips: "Eugene, if I prefer to teach, for a support, why should you object?"

"Simply because you are unnecessarily lowering yourself in the estimation of the community. You will find that the circle which a residence under Dr. Hartwell's roof gave you the entrée of, will look down with contempt upon a subordinate teacher in a public school——"

"Then, thank Heaven, I am forever shut out from that circle! Is my merit to be gauged by the cost of my clothes, or the number of fashionable parties I attend, think you?"

"Assuredly, Beulah, the things you value so lightly are the standards of worth and gentility in the community you live in, as you will unfortunately find."

She looked at him steadily, with grief, and scorn, and wonder in her deep, searching eyes, as she exclaimed:

"Oh, Eugene! what has changed you so, since the bygone years, when, in the asylum, we talked of the future? Of laboring, conquering, and earning homes for ourselves! Oh, has the foul atmosphere of foreign lands extinguished all your self-respect? Do you come back sordid and sycophantic, and the slave of opinions you would once have utterly detested? Have you narrowed your soul, and bowed down before the miserable standard which every genuine, manly spirit must loathe?"

"This fierce recrimination and unmerited tirade is not exactly the welcome I was prepared to expect," returned Eugene, haughtily; and rising, he took his hat from the table. She rose also, but made no effort to detain him, and leaned her head against the mantelpiece. He watched her a moment, then put his hand on her shoulder:

"Beulah, as a man, I see the world and its relations in a far different light from that in which I viewed it while a boy. You refuse to see things in their actual existence, and prefer toying with romantic dreams. Beulah, I have awakened from them since we parted."

She put up her hand deprecatingly, and answered:

"Then let me dream on! let me dream on!"

"Beulah, I have been sadly mistaken in my estimate of your character. I could not have believed there was so much fierce obstinacy, so much stubborn pride, in your nature."

She instantly lifted her head, and their eyes met. Other days came back to both; early confidence, mutual love and dependence. For a moment his nobler impulses prevailed, and, with an unsteady lip, he passed his arm quickly around her. But she drew coldly back, and said:

"It seems that we are mutually disappointed in each other. I regret that the discharge of my duty should so far conflict with your opinions and standards of propriety as to alienate us so completely as it seems likely to do. All my life I have looked to you for guidance and counsel; but to-night you have shaken my trust, and henceforth I must depend upon my own heart to support me in my work. Oh, Eugene! friend of my childhood! beware, lest you sink yourself in your own estimation! Oh, for days, and months, and years, I have pictured the hour of your return, little dreaming that it would prove one of the saddest of my life! I have always looked up to you. Oh, Eugene! Eugene! you are not what you were! Do not! oh, do not make me pity you! That would kill me!" She covered her face with her hands, and shuddered convulsively.

"I am not so changed as you think me," returned Eugene, proudly.

"Then, in early years, I was miserably deceived in your character. For the sake of wealth, and what the world calls 'position,' you have sold yourself. In lieu of gold and influence, Mr. Graham has your will and conscience. Ah, Eugene! how can you bear to be a mere tool in his hands?"

"Beulah, your language, your insinuations, are unpardonable! By Heaven, no one but yourself might utter them, and not even you can do so with impunity! Beulah, I have loved you well, but such another exhibition of scorn and bitterness will indeed alienate us. Since you have set aside my view and counsel in the matter of teaching, I shall not again refer to it, I promise you. But, remember, since the hour you stood beside your father's grave, leaning on me, I have been constantly your friend. My expostulations were for what I considered your good. Beulah, I am still, to you, the Eugene of other days. It will be your own fault if the sanctity of our friendship is not maintained."

"It shall not be my fault, Eugene." She hastily held out her hand. He clasped it in his, and, as if dismissing the topics which had proved so stormy, drew her to a seat, and said, composedly:

"Come, tell me what you have been doing with yourself these long five years, which have changed you so. I have heard already of your heroism in nursing the sick during the late awful season of pestilence and death."

For an hour they talked on different themes, each feeling that the other was veiling the true impulses of the heart, and finally Eugene rose to go.

"How is Cornelia's health now?" asked Beulah, as they stood up before the fire.

"About the same. She never complains, but does not look like herself. Apropos! she intrusted a note to me, for you, which I had quite forgotten. Here it is. Miss Dupres is with her for the winter; at least a part of it. Cornelia will come and see you in a day or two, she requested me to say; and I do hope, Beulah, that you will visit her often; she has taken a great fancy to you."

"How long since?" answered Beulah.

"Since she met you at a concert, I believe. By the way, we are very musical at our house, and promise ourselves some delightful evenings this winter. You must hear Antoinette Dupres sing; she is equal to the best prima-donna of Italy. Do you practice much?"

"Yes."

"Well, I must go. When shall I see you again?"

"Whenever you feel disposed to come; and I hope that will be often. Eugene, you were a poor correspondent; see that you prove a better visitor."

"Well, I will see you again to-morrow; till then good-by." They shook hands, and she went back to her own room. Cornelia's note contained an invitation to spend the next evening with them; she would call as soon as possible. She put it aside, and, throwing her arms on the mantelpiece, bowed her head upon them. This, then, was the hour which, for five years, she had anticipated as an occasion of unmixed delight. She was thinking of the handsome face which a little while before was beside her; thinking, with keen agony, of footprints there, which she had never dreamed of seeing; they were very slight, yet unmistakable—the fell signet of dissipation. Poor Beulah! the idol of her girlhood fell from its pedestal, and lay in crumbling ruins at her feet. In this hour of reunion, she saw clearly into her own heart; she did not love him, save as a friend, or as a brother. She felt a soft touch on her shoulder, and raised her sad, tearless face. Clara, with her ethereal, spiritual countenance, stood on the hearth: "Do I disturb you?" said she, timidly.

"No; I am glad you came. I was listening to cold, bitter, bitter thoughts. Sit down, Clara; you look fatigued."

"Oh, Beulah! I am weary in body and spirit; I have no energy; my very existence is a burden to me."

"Our situations are similar, yet I never repine as you do."

"You have not the same cause. You are self-reliant; need no society to conduce to your happiness; your heart is bound up in your books."

"Where yours had better have been," answered Beulah. She walked across the floor several times, then said, impressively, as she threw her arm round Clara's waist:

"Crush it; crush it; if you crush your heart in the effort."

"I know now that it is perfectly hopeless," said Clara.

"You might have known it from the first."

"No; it is but recently that the barrier has risen."

"What barrier?" asked Beulah, curiously.

"For Heaven's sake, Beulah, do not mock me! You know too well what separates us."

"Yes; utter uncongeniality."

Clara raised her head, looked into the honest face before her, and answered:

"If that were all, I could yet hope to merit his love; but you know that is not so. You must know that he has no love to bestow."

Beulah's face seemed instantly steeled. A grayish hue crept over it; and drawing her slender form to its full height, she replied, with haughty coldness:

"What do you mean? I can only conjecture."

"Beulah, you know he loves you!" cried Clara.

"Clara Sanders, never say that again as long as you live; for there is not the shadow of truth in it."

"Ah, I would not believe it till it was forced upon me! The heart bars itself a long time to painful truths! I have looked at you, and wondered whether you could be ignorant of what I saw so clearly. I believe you are honest in what you say. He loves you, whether you see it or not. And, moreover, the world has begun to join your names. I have heard, more than once, that he educated you with the intention of marrying you; and recently it has been rumored that the marriage would take place very soon."

"It is utterly false from beginning to end! He never had such a thought! never! never!" cried Beulah, striking her clinched hand heavily on the table.

"Are you acquainted with the circumstances of his early life, and ill-fated marriage?" asked Clara.

"No; he never alluded to his marriage in any way."

"His wife was very, very beautiful; I saw her once when I was a child," continued Clara.

"Of course she must have been, for he could not love one who was not."

"She lived but a few months; yet even in that short time they had become utterly estranged, and she died of a broken heart. There is some mystery connected with it; they were separated."

"Separated!" cried, Beulah, in amazement.

"Her conduct was not irreproachable, it has been whispered."

"Aye, whispered by slanderous tongues! Not openly avowed, to admit of denial and refutation! I wonder the curse of Gomorrah does not descend on this gossiping, libelous community."

"No one seems to know anything definite about the affair, though I have often heard it commented upon."

"Clara, let it be buried henceforth. Neither you nor I have any right to discuss and censure what neither of us knows anything about. Dr. Hartwell has been my best and truest friend. I love and honor him; his faults are his own, and only his Maker has the right to balance his actions. Once for all, let the subject drop."

In the afternoon of the following day, she was engaged with her drawing, when a succession of quick raps at her door forced an impatient "come in" from her lips. The door opened, and she rose as the queenly form of Cornelia Graham stood before her.

"I have waived ceremony, you see, and come up to your room."

"How are you?" said Beulah, as they shook hands.

"Just as usual. How did you escape the plague?"

"By resolving not to have it, I believe."

"Did you receive my note yesterday?"

"Yes, I am obliged for your invitation, but I cannot accept it."

"So I supposed, and, therefore, came to make sure of you. You are too proud to come, until all the family call upon you, eh?"

"No; only people who consider themselves inferior are on the watch for slights, and scrupulously exact the minutest requirements of etiquette. On the plane of equality these barriers melt away."

As Beulah spoke, she looked steadily into the searching, black eyes, which seemed striving to read her soul. An expression of pleasure lighted the sallow face, and the lines about the beautiful mouth melted into a smile.

"Then you have not forgiven my rudeness during early schooldays?"

"I had nothing to forgive. I had forgotten the affair, until you spoke."

"And you positively will not come?"

"Not this evening. Another time, I certainly will come, with pleasure."

"Say to-morrow, then?"

"To-morrow I shall be engaged."

"Where? Excuse my pertinacity."

"At Dr. Asbury's; I have promised to practice some duets with Helen."

"Do you play well, Beulah? Are you a good musician?"

"Yes."

Cornelia mused a moment, and then said, slowly, as if watching the effect of her question:

"You have seen Eugene, of course?"

"Yes."

"You endeavored to dissuade him from complying with my father's wishes, did you not?"

"Yes, most earnestly," answered Beulah, gravely.

"Beulah Benton, I like you. You are honest, indeed. At last I find one who is." With a sudden impulse, she laid her white, jeweled hand on Beulah's.

"You seem to have looked on human nature through misanthropic lenses."

"Yes, I bought a pair of spectacles, for which I paid a most exorbitant price; but they were labeled 'experience!'"

"You do not seem to have enjoyed your tour particularly."

"Yes, I did; but one is glad to rest sometimes. I may yet prove a second Bayard Taylor, notwithstanding. I should like you for a companion. You would not sicken me with stereotyped nonsense."

Her delicate fingers folded themselves about Beulah's, who could not bring herself to withdraw her hand.

"And sure enough, you would not be adopted? Do you mean to adhere to your determination, and maintain yourself by teaching?"

"I do."

"And I admire you for it! Beulah, you must get over your dislike of me."

"I do not dislike you, Cornelia."

"Thank you for your negative preference," returned Cornelia, rather amused at her companion's straightforward manner. Then, with a sudden contraction of her brow, she added:

"I am not so bearish as they give me credit for."

"I never heard you called so."

"Beulah, will you come on Saturday morning, and spend an hour or so with me?"

"No, I have a music lesson to give; but if you will be at home in the afternoon, I will come with pleasure."

"I shall expect you. Good-by. You will come Saturday?"

"Yes; if nothing occurs to prevent it, I will come in the afternoon." Beulah pressed her offered hand, and saw her descend the steps with a feeling of pity which she could not exactly analyze. Passing by the window, she glanced down, and paused to look at an elegant carriage standing before the door. The day was cold, but the top was thrown back, and on one of the cushions sat, or rather reclined, a richly dressed, and very beautiful girl. As Beulah leaned out to examine the lovely stranger more closely, Cornelia appeared. The driver opened the low door, and as Cornelia stepped in, the young lady, who was Miss Dupres, of course, ejaculated, rather peevishly:

"You stayed an age."

"Drive down the Bay-road, Wilson," was Cornelia's reply, and as she folded her rich cloak about her, the carriage was whirled away.

Beulah went back to the fire, warmed her fingers, and resumed her drawing; thinking that she would not willingly change places with the petted child of wealth and luxury.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was Christmas eve; cold, cloudy, and damp. The store windows were gay with every conceivable and inconceivable device for attracting attention. Parents, nurses and porters hurried along with mysterious-looking bundles and important

countenances. Crowds of curious, merry children thronged the sidewalks; here a thinly clad, meager boy looked with longing eyes and empty pockets at pyramids of fruit and sweetmeats; and there a richly dressed group chattered like blackbirds, and occasionally fired a pack of crackers, to the infinite dismay of horses and drivers. From her window, Beulah looked down on the merry groups, and involuntarily contrasted the bustling, crowded streets with the silence and desolation which had reigned over the same thoroughfares only a few months before.

"What makes you look so solemn?" asked Clara, who had been busily engaged in dressing a doll for one of Mrs. Hoyt's children.

"Because I feel solemn, I suppose."

Clara came up, and passing her arm round Beulah's shoulder, gazed down into the noisy street. She still wore mourning, and the alabaster fairness of her complexion contrasted vividly with the black bombazine dress. Though thin and pale, there was an indescribable expression of peace on the sweet face; a calm, clear light of contentment in the mild, brown eyes. The holy serenity of the countenance was rendered more apparent by the restless, stormy visage of her companion. Every passing cloud of perplexed thought cast its shadow over Beulah's face, and on this occasion she looked more than usually grave.

Clara feared her friend, much as she loved her, and, since the partial discovery of her skepticism, she had rather shunned her society. Now she watched the heavy brow, and deep, piercing eyes, uneasily, and gently withdrawing her arm, she glided out of the room. The tide of life still swelled through the streets, and forcibly casting the load of painful reminiscences from her, Beulah kept her eyes on the merry faces, and listened to the gay, careless prattle of the children. The stately rustle of brocaded silk caused her to look up, and Cornelia Graham greeted her with:

"I have come to take you home with me for the holidays."

"You have been ill again," said Beulah.

"Not ill, but I shall be soon, I know. One of my old attacks is coming on; I feel it; and Beulah, to be honest, which I can with you (without casting pearls before swine), that very circumstance makes me want you. I dined out to-day, and have just left the fashionable crowd to come and ask you to spend the holidays with me. The house will be gay. Antoinette intends to have a set of tableaux, but it is probable I shall be confined to my room. Will you give your time to a cross invalid, for such I certainly am? I would be stretched upon St. Lawrence's gridiron before I could be

brought to say as much to anybody else. I am not accustomed to ask favors, Beulah; it has been my habit to grant them. Nevertheless, I want you, and am not too proud to come after you. Will you come?"

"Yes, if I may remain with you, altogether."

In a few moments Beulah was ready, and, after informing Clara and Mrs. Hoyt of her intended absence, the two entered Mr. Graham's elegant carriage. The gas was now lighted, and the spirited horses dashed along, through streets brilliantly illuminated and thronged with happy people.

"What a Babel! About equal to Constantinople and its dog orchestra," muttered Cornelia, as the driver paused to allow one of the military companies to pass. The martial music, together with the hubbub which otherwise prevailed, alarmed the horses, and they plunged violently. The driver endeavored to back out into an alley, but in the attempt the carriage was whirled round, the coachman jerked over the dashboard into the gutter and the frightened animals dashed at furious speed down the main street. Luckily, the top was thrown back, making the carriage open, and, springing forward to the post so unceremoniously vacated by the driver, Beulah snatched the reins which were just within her reach. The street was full of vehicles, and though, as may well be imagined, there was every effort made to give the track, the carriage rushed against the bright yellow wheels of a light buggy, in which two young men were trying to manage a fast trotter. There was a terrible smash of wheels, the young gentlemen were suddenly landed in the mud, and their emancipated steed galloped on, with the wreck of the buggy at his heels. Men, women and children gathered on the corners to witness the *dénouement*. Drays, carts and wagons were seized with a simultaneous stampede, which soon cleared the middle of the street, and, uninjured by the collision, our carriage flew on. Cornelia sat on the back seat, ghastly pale and motionless, expecting every minute to be hurled out, while Beulah stood up in front, reins in hand, trying to guide the maddened horses. Her bonnet fell off; the motion loosened her comb, and down came her long, heavy hair, in black, blinding folds. She shook it all back from her face, and soon saw that this reckless game of dodging vehicles could not last much longer. Right ahead, at the end of the street, was the wharf, crowded with cotton bales, barrels and a variety of freight; just beyond was the river. A number of gentlemen stood on a neighboring corner, and, with one impulse, they rushed forward with extended arms. On sprang the horses, almost upon them; eager hands grasped at the bits.

"Stand back—all of you! You might as well catch at the winds!" shouted Beulah, and, with one last effort, she threw

her whole weight on the reins and turned the horses into a cross street. The wheels struck the curbstone; the carriage tilted, rocked, fell back again, and on they went for three squares more, when the horses stopped short before the livery-stable where they were kept. Embossed with foam, and panting like stags at bay, they were seized by a dozen hands.

"By all the gods of Greece! you have had a flying trip of it!" cried Dr. Asbury. He had followed them for at least half a dozen blocks, and was pale with anxiety.

"See about Cornelia," said Beulah, seating herself, and twisting up the veil of hair which swept round her form.

"Cornelia has fainted! Halloo, there! some water! quick!" said the doctor, stepping into the carriage and attempting to lift the motionless figure. But Cornelia opened her eyes and answered, unsteadily:

"No! carry me home! Dr. Asbury, take me home!"

The brilliant eyes closed, a sort of spasm distorted her features, and she sank back once more, rigid and seemingly lifeless. Dr. Asbury took the reins firmly in his hands, seated himself, and speaking gently to the trembling horses, started homeward. Mr. Graham met the carriage at the door, with considerable agitation and alarm in his usually phlegmatic countenance. As Cornelia's colorless face met his view, he threw up his hands and exclaimed:

"My God! is she dead? I knew it would end this way, some day!"

"Nonsense, Graham! She is frightened out of her wits—that is all! These Yankee horses of yours have been playing the very deuce. Clear the way there, all of you!"

Lifting Cornelia in his strong arms, Dr. Asbury carried her up to her own room and placed her on a sofa. Having known her from childhood, and treated her so often in similar attacks, he immediately administered some medicine, and ere long had the satisfaction of seeing the rigid aspect leave her face. She sat up, and, without a word, began to take off her kid gloves, which fitted tightly. Suddenly, looking up at her father, who was anxiously regarding her, she said, abruptly:

"There are no more like her—she kept me from making a simpleton of myself."

"Whom do you mean, my dear?"

"Whom? whom? why, Beulah Benton, of course! Where is she? Come out of that corner, you quaint, solemn statue!" She held out her hand, and a warm, glad smile broke over her pallid face as Beulah approached her.

"You certainly created a very decided sensation. Beulah made quite a passable Medea, with her inky hair trailing over the back of the seat, and her little hands grasping the reins

with desperate energy. By Phœbus! you turned that corner at the bank like an electric bolt. Shake hands, Beulah! After this you will do in any emergency," said Dr. Asbury.

"I feel very grateful to you," began Mr. Graham; but Beulah cut short his acknowledgments by saying, hastily:

"Sir, I did nothing at all, Dr. Asbury is resolved to make a heroine of me; that's all. You owe me nothing."

"There comes Antoinette ejaculating up the steps. Father, tell her I do not want to see her, or anybody else. Don't let her come in here," cried Cornelia, with a nervous start.

Mr. Graham, who felt a certain awe of his willful child, notwithstanding his equable temper, immediately withdrew. His wife hastened into the room, and, with trembling lips, touched her daughter's cheek and brow, exclaiming:

"Oh, my child, what a narrow escape! It is horrible to think of—horrible!"

"Not at all, mother, seeing that nothing was hurt in the least. I was sick, anyway, as I told you. Don't you see Beulah sitting there?"

Mrs. Graham welcomed her guest cordially.

"You have a great deal of presence of mind, I believe, Miss Beulah? You are fortunate."

"Mother, will you send up tea for us? We want a quiet time; at least I do, and Beulah will stay with me."

"But, my love, it is selfish to exclude the balance of the family. Why not come down to the sitting-room, where we can all be together?" pleaded the mother.

"Because I prefer staying just where I am."

"May I come in?" asked Eugene, at the door.

"No; go and sing duets with Netta, and amuse yourself downstairs," said she, shortly.

Nevertheless he came in, shook hands with Beulah, and, leaning over the back of Cornelia's chair, asked, tenderly:

"How is my sister? I heard on the street that you were injured."

"Oh, I suppose the whole city will be bemoaning my tragic fate. I am not at all hurt, Eugene."

"Beulah, you will be with us to-morrow, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry I am obliged to dine out; I shall be at home, however, most of the day. I called the other evening, but you were not at home."

"Yes; I was sorry I did not see you," said Beulah, looking steadily at his flushed face and sparkling eyes.

"Dine out Eugene! For what, I should like to know?" cried Cornelia, rising herself in her chair.

"Henderson and Milbank are both here, you know, and I could not refuse to join them in a Christmas dinner."

"Then why did you not invite them to dine at your own house?" Her voice was angry; her glance searching.

"The party was made up before I knew anything about it. They will all be here in the evening."

"I doubt it!" said she, sneeringly. The flush deepened on his cheek, and he bit his lip.

"I hope my sister will be well enough to take part in the tableaux to-morrow evening." Taking her beautifully molded hand, he looked at her anxiously. Her piercing, black eyes were riveted on his countenance, as she answered:

"I don't know, Eugene; I have long since abandoned the hope of ever being well again. Perhaps I may be able to get down to the parlors. There is Antoinette in the passage. Good-night." She motioned him away. He kissed her tenderly, shook hands a second time with Beulah, and left the room. Cornelia bowed her head on her palms, and, though her features were concealed, Beulah thought she moaned.

"Cornelia, are you ill again? What can I do for you?"

The feeble woman lifted her haggard face, and answered:

"What can you do? That remains to be seen. Something must be done. Beulah, I may die at any hour, and you must save him."

"What do you mean?" Beulah's heart throbbed painfully.

"Did you detect it when he first came home?"

"Yes."

"Oh, it is like a hideous nightmare! I cannot realize that Eugene, so noble, so pure, so refined, could ever have gone to the excesses he has been guilty of. He left home all that he should be; but five years abroad have strangely changed him. My parents will not see it; my mother says: 'All young men are wild at first'; and my father shuts his eyes to his altered habits. Eugene constantly drinks too much. I hope I shall be quiet in my grave before I see him drunk! It would kill me, I verily believe, to know that he had so utterly degraded himself." She shaded her face with her hands and Beulah replied, hastily:

"He surely cannot fall so low! Eugene will never reel home, an unconscious drunkard! Oh, no! it is impossible! impossible! The stars in heaven will fall first!"

"Do you believe what you say?"

"I hope it; and hope engenders faith," answered Beulah.

A bitter smile curled Cornelia's lips, and, sinking back in her chair, she continued:

"Where excessive drinking is not considered a disgrace, young men indulge without a thought of the consequences. Instead of excluding them from genteel circles, their dissipation is smoothed over, or unnoticed; and it has become so prevalent in this city, that of all the gentlemen whom I meet

in so-called fashionable society, there are very few who abstain from the wine cup. I have seen them at parties, staggering through a quadrille, or talking the most disgusting nonsense to girls, who have long since ceased to regard dissipation as a stigma upon the names and characters of their friends. I tell you, the dissipation of the young men here is sickening to think of. Since I came home I have been constantly reminded of it; and, oh, Eugene is following in their disgraceful steps! I fancied that I could readily redeem Eugene from his dangerous lapses, but my efforts are rendered useless by the temptations which assail him from every quarter. He shuns me; hourly the barriers between us strengthen. Beulah, I look to you. He loves you, and your influence might prevail, if properly directed. You must save him! You must!"

"I have not the influence you ascribe to me."

"Do not say so! do not say so! Are you not to be his wife one day?"

"His wife! Cornelia Graham, are you mad?"

"He told me that he expected to marry you; that it had always been a settled thing. Beulah, you have not broken the engagement—surely you have not?"

"No positive engagement ever existed. While we were children, we often spoke of our future as one, but of late neither of us has alluded to the subject. We are only friends, linked by memories of early years. Nay, since his return, we have almost become strangers."

"He has deceived me! Fool that I was not to probe the mask!" Cornelia started up and paced the floor with uncontrollable agitation.

"Explain yourself; Eugene is above suspicion!" cried Beulah, with pale, fluttering lips.

"Explain myself! Then understand that my honorable brother professed to love you, and pretended that he expected to marry you, simply and solely to blind me, in order to conceal the truth. I taxed him with a preference for Antoinette Dupres, which I fancied his manner evinced. He denied it most earnestly, protesting that he felt bound to you. Now do you understand?"

"Still you may misjudge him," returned Beulah, haughtily.

"No, no! My mother has seen it all along. But, fool that I was, I believed his words! Now, Beulah, if he marries Antoinette, you will be amply revenged, or my name is not Cornelia Graham!" She laughed bitterly, and, dropping some medicine from a vial, swallowed the potion and resumed her walk up and down the floor.

"Revenged! What is it to me that he should marry your cousin? If he loves her, it is no business of mine, and cer-

tainly you have no right to object. You are miserably deceived if you imagine that his marriage would cause me an instant's regret. Think you I could love a man whom I knew to be my inferior? Indeed, you know little of my nature." She spoke with curling lips and a proud smile.

"You place an exalted estimate upon yourself."

They looked at each other half defiantly for a moment; then the heiress bowed her head and said, in low, broken tones:

"Oh, Beulah! Beulah! child of poverty; would I could change places with you!"

"You are weak, Cornelia," answered Beulah, gravely.

"In some respects, perhaps, I am; but you are bold to tell me so."

"Genuine friendship ignores all hesitancy in speaking the truth. You sought me; I am very candid—perhaps blunt. If my honesty does not suit you, it is an easy matter to 'discontinue our intercourse.'"

"You wish me to understand that you do not need my society—my patronage?"

"Patronage implies dependence, which, in this instance, does not exist. An earnest, self-reliant woman cannot be patronized in the sense in which you employ the term." She could not forbear smiling. The thought of being under patronage was, to her, supremely ridiculous.

"You do not want my friendship, then?"

"I doubt whether you have any to bestow. You seem to have no love for anything," replied Beulah, coldly.

"Oh, you wrong me!" cried Cornelia, passionately.

"If I do, it is your own fault. I only judge you from what you have shown of your nature."

"Remember, I have been an invalid all my life."

"Sit down, Cornelia; you are not able to bear this excitement. For the present, let Eugene and his future rest, and try to compose yourself."

The colorless face, with its gleaming eyes, was suddenly lifted, and, throwing her arms round Beulah's neck, Cornelia rested her proud head on the orphan's shoulder.

"Be my friend while I live. Oh, give me some of your calm contentment, some of your strength!"

"I am your friend, Cornelia; I will always be such; but every soul must be sufficient for itself. Do not look to me; lean upon your own nature; it will suffice for all its needs."

With the young teacher, pity was almost synonymous with contempt; and as she looked at the joyless face of her companion, she could not avoid thinking her miserably weak.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRISTMAS day was sunny and beautiful. The bending sky was as deeply blue as that which hung over Bethlehem eighteen hundred years before; God's coloring had not faded.

Ragged boys and barefooted girls tripped gayly along the streets, merry and uncomplaining; and surrounded by velvet, silver and marble, by every superfluity of luxury, Cornelia Graham, with a bitter heart and hopeless soul, shivered in her easy-chair before a glowing fire. Mr. and Mrs. Graham and Antoinette sat round the hearth, discussing the tableaux for the evening, while, with her cheek upon her hand, Cornelia listlessly fingered a diamond necklace which her father had just given her. The blazing jewels slipped through her pale fingers all unnoticed, and she looked up abstractedly when Mr. Graham touched her and repeated his question for the third time:

"My child, won't you come down to the sitting-room?"

"No, sir; I am better here."

"But, of course, Miss Benton will desire to see the tableaux. You would not keep her from them?"

"Thank you, Mr. Graham, I prefer remaining with Cornelia," answered Beulah.

"Mother, where is Eugene?"

"I really do not know. Do you, Mr. Graham?"

"He has gone to the hotel to see some of his old Heidelberg friends," answered Netta, examining Beulah's plain merino dress very minutely as she spoke.

"When he comes home, be good enough to tell him that I wish to see him."

"Very well, my dear." Mrs. Graham left the room, followed by her husband and niece. For some time Cornelia sat just as they left her; the diamond necklace slipped down, and lay, a glittering heap on the carpet, and the delicate waxen hands drooped listlessly over the arms of the chair.

There was a hasty rap at the door, and, as Eugene entered, the cloud on Cornelia's brow instantly lifted. His gay, Christmas greeting, and sunny, handsome face diverted her mind, and as her hand rested on his arm, her countenance evinced a degree of intense love, such as Beulah had supposed her incapable of feeling.

"You intend to come down to-night, do you not?"

"Not if I can avoid it. Eugene, take Beulah into the parlor, and ask Antoinette to sing. Afterwards, make Beulah sing, also, and be sure to leave all the doors open, so that I can hear. Mind, you must not detain her long."

Beulah would have demurred, but at this moment she saw

Dr. Hartwell's buggy approaching the house. Her heart seemed to spring to her lips, and, feeling that after their last unsatisfactory interview she was in no mood to meet him, she quickly descended the steps. The doorbell uttered a sharp peal as they reached the hall, and she had just time to escape into the parlor when the doctor was ushered in.

"What is the matter?" asked Eugene.

"Ask Miss Dupres to sing, will you?"

He looked at her curiously an instant, then turned away and persuaded the little beauty to sing.

She took her seat and ran her jeweled fingers over the pearl keys with an air which very clearly denoted her opinion of her musical proficiency.

"Well, sir, what will you have?"

"That favorite morceau from 'Linda.'"

"You have never heard it, I suppose," said she, glancing over her shoulder at the young teacher.

"Yes, I have heard it," answered Beulah.

Antoinette half shrugged her shoulders, as if she thought the statement questionable, and began the song. Beulah listened attentively; she was conscious of feeling more than ordinary interest in this performance, and almost held her breath as the clear, silvery voice caroled through the most intricate passages.

"Sing me something else," said she.

Antoinette bit her lips, and answered, ungraciously:

"No; I shall have to sing to-night."

"Now, Beulah, I shall hear you." Eugene spoke rather carelessly.

"Do you really wish to hear me, Eugene?"

"Of course, I do," said he, with some surprise.

"And so do I," added Mrs. Graham, leaning against the piano, and exchanging glances with Antoinette.

Beulah looked up, and asked, quietly:

"Eugene, shall I sing you a ballad? One of those simple old tunes we used to love so well in days gone by."

"No, no. Something operatic," cried Antoinette.

"Well, then, Miss Dupres, select something."

"Can't you favor us with 'Casta-Diva'?" returned the beauty, with something very like a sneer.

Beulah's eyes gave a momentary flash, but by a powerful effort she curbed her anger, and commenced the song.

It was amusing to mark the expression of utter astonishment which gradually overspread Antoinette's face as the magnificent voice of her despised rival swelled in waves of entrancing melody through the lofty rooms. Eugene looked quite as much amazed. Beulah felt her triumph, and heartily enjoyed it. There was a sparkle in her eye, and a proud smile

on her lip, which she did not attempt to conceal. As she rose from the piano, Eugene said, eagerly:

"I never dreamed of your possessing such a voice. It is superb—perfectly magnificent! Why did you not tell me of it before?"

"You heard it long ago, in the olden time," said she.

"Ah, but it has improved incredibly."

"It is the culture, then, not the voice itself?"

"It is both. Who taught you?"

"I had several teachers, but owe what excellence I may possess to my guardian. He aided me more than all the instruction-books that ever were compiled."

"You must come and practice with the musical people who meet here very frequently," said Mrs. Graham.

"Thank you, madam; I have other engagements which will prevent my doing so."

"Nonsense, Beulah; we have claims on you. I certainly have," answered Eugene.

"Have you? I was not aware of the fact."

There was a patronizing manner in all this which she felt no disposition to submit to.

"Most assuredly I have, Beulah, and mean to maintain them."

She perfectly understood the haughty expression of his countenance, and, moving toward the door, replied, coldly:

"Another time, Eugene, we will discuss them."

She did not pause to hear what followed, but ran up the steps, longing to get out of a house where she plainly perceived her presence was by no means desired. Cornelia sat with her head drooped on her thin hand, and, without looking up, said, more gently than was her custom:

"Why did you hurry back so soon?"

"Because the parlor was not particularly attractive."

There came the first good-humored laugh which Beulah had ever heard from Cornelia's lips, as the latter replied:

"What friends you and old, growling Diogenes would have been. Pray, how did my cousin receive your performance?"

"Very much as if she wished me amid the ruins of Persepolis, where I certainly shall be before I inflict anything more upon her. Cornelia, do not ask or expect me to come here again, for I will not; of course, it is quite as palpable to you as to me that I am no favorite with your parents, and something still less with your cousin. Consequently, you need not expect to see me here again."

"Do not say so, Beulah; you must, you shall, come, and I will see that no one dares interfere with my wishes. My father and mother dread lest Eugene should return to his 'boyish fancy' (as you are pleased to term it), and look on

you with jealous eyes. Oh! Mammon is the God of this generation. But, Beulah, you must not allow all this miserable maneuvering to keep you from me. If you do, I will very soon succeed in making this home of mine very unpleasant for Antoinette Dupres."

"Do not excite yourself so unnecessarily, Cornelia. What you may or may not think of your relatives is no concern of mine. You have a carriage always at your command, and when you desire to see a real friend, you can visit me. Let this suffice for this subject. Suppose we have a game of chess or backgammon? What do you say?"

"I am in no humor for games. Sit down and tell me about your leaving Dr. Hartwell's protection."

"I have nothing to tell."

"He is a singular being?"

Receiving no answer, she added, impatiently:

"Don't you think so?"

"I do, in the sense of great superiority."

"If he is so faultless and unequaled, pray, why did not you remain in his house?"

"I am not in the habit of accounting to anyone for my motives or my actions."

"You need not be so fierce. I like Dr. Hartwell quite as well as you do, I dare say; but probably I know more of his history."

"It is all immaterial to me. Drop the subject, if you please, and let me read to you. I believe I came here for quiet companionship, not cross-questioning."

"Beulah, the world says you are to marry your guardian. I do not ask from impertinent curiosity, but sincere friendship—is it true?"

"About as true as your notion of my marriage with Eugene. No; scarcely so plausible."

"Our families were connected, you know."

"No, I neither know, nor wish to know. He never alluded to his wife, or his history, and I have just now no desire to hear anything about the matter. He is the best friend I ever had; I want to honor and reverence him always; and, of course, the world's version of his domestic affairs does him injustice. So, be good enough to say no more about him."

"Very well. On hearing your voice from the parlor, he left a small parcel, which he requested me to give you. He laid it on the table, I believe; yes, there it is. Now read 'Egmont' to me, if you please."

Cornelia crossed the room, threw herself on a couch, and settled her pillow comfortably. Beulah took the parcel, which was carefully sealed, and wondered what it contained. It was

heavy, and felt hard. They had parted in anger; what could it possibly be? Cornelia's black eyes were on her countenance. She put the package in her pocket, seated herself by the couch, and commenced "Egmont."

It was with a feeling of indescribable relief that the orphan awoke at dawn the following morning, and dressed by the gray twilight. The young teacher could not wait for the late breakfast of the luxurious Grahams, and just as the first level ray of sunshine flashed up from the east, she tied on her bonnet, and noiselessly entered Cornelia's room. The heavy curtains kept it close and dark, and on the hearth a taper burned with pale, sickly light. Cornelia slept soundly; but her breathing was heavy and irregular, and the face wore a scowl, as if some severe pain had distorted it. Beulah felt tears of compassion weighing down her lashes as she watched the haggard countenance of this petted child of fortune; but, unwilling to rouse her, she silently stole down the steps. The hall was dark; the smell of gas almost stifling. Of course, the servants followed the example of their owners, and, as no one appeared, she unlocked the street door, and walked homeward with a sensation of pleasurable relief.

She ran up to her room, threw open the blinds, looped back the curtains, and drew that mysterious package from her pocket. She was very curious to see the contents, and broke the seal with trembling fingers. The outer wrappings fell off, and disclosed an oblong *papier-mâché* case. It opened with a spring, and revealed to her a beautiful watch and chain, bearing her name in delicate tracery. A folded slip of paper lay on the crimson velvet lining of the box, and, recognizing the characters, she hastily read this brief sentence:

Wear it constantly, Beulah, to remind you that, in adversity, you still have

A GUARDIAN.

Tears rushed unrestrained as she looked at the beautiful gift. Not for an instant did she dream of accepting it, and she shrank shudderingly from widening the breach which already existed by a refusal. Locking up the slip of paper in her workbox, she returned the watch to its case, and carefully retied the parcel. Long before she had wrapped the purse in paper, and prevailed on Clara to give it to the doctor. He had received it without comment, but she could not return the watch in the same way, for Clara was now able to attend regularly to her school duties, and it was very uncertain when she would see him. Yet she felt comforted, for this gift assured her that, however coldly he chose to treat her when they met, he had not thrown her off entirely. With all her independence, she could not bear the thought of his utter alienation; and

the consciousness of his remaining interest thrilled her heart with gladness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE Saturday morning, some days subsequent to her visit to the Grahams, Beulah set off for the business part of the city, in the hope of being able to place some manuscripts advantageously. Her hopes were high when she started out, but all she could get from the magazine editor to whom she applied was a promise to look over her articles, and, if they were worth printing, to print them; and, if worth paying for, to pay for them at his own figure.

Later in the afternoon of the same day Beulah was preparing to call upon Pauline, when the door was opened and Pauline herself rushed in.

The impulsive girl threw her arms round Beulah's neck, and kissed her repeatedly.

"Be quite, and let me look at you. Oh, Pauline, how beautiful you have grown!" cried Beulah, who could not forbear expressing the admiration she felt.

"Yes; the artists in Florence raved considerably about my beauty. I can't tell you the number of times I sat for my portrait. It is very pleasant to be pretty; I enjoy it amazingly," said she, with all the candor which had characterized her in childhood; and, with a vigorous squeeze of Beulah's hand, she continued:

"I was astonished when I came, and found that you had left Uncle Guy, and were teaching little ragged, dirty children their A, B, C's. What possessed you to do such a silly thing?"

"Duty, my dear Pauline."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't begin about duty. Ernest—" She paused, a rich glow swept over her face, and, shaking back her curls, she added:

"You must quit all this. I say you must!"

"How you do rattle on about things you don't comprehend," laughed Beulah.

"Come, don't set me down for a simpleton! I tell you I am in earnest! You must come back to Uncle Guy!"

"Pauline, it is worse than useless to talk of this matter. How is Mr. Lockhart's health?"

"Very poor, I am sorry to say. He looks so thin and pale, I often tell him he would make quite as good a pictured saint as any we saw abroad."

"What makes you so restless, Pauline."

"Because I want to tell you something, and really do not know how to begin," said she, laughing and blushing.

"But why should you hesitate to disclose it?"

"Simply because your tremendous gray eyes have such an owlish way of looking people out of countenance. Now don't look quite through me, and I will pluck up my courage, and confess. Beulah—I am going to be married soon." She hid her crimsoned cheeks behind her hands.

"Married? impossible!" cried Beulah.

"But I tell you I am! Here is my engagement ring. Now, the most astonishing part of the whole affair is that my intended sovereign is a minister!"

"You a minister's wife, Pauline? Oh, child, you are jesting!" said Beulah, with an incredulous smile.

"No; absurd as it may seem, it is nevertheless true. I am to be married in March. Ma says I am a fool; Mr. Lockhart encourages and supports me; and Uncle Guy laughs heartily every time the affair is alluded to. At first, before we went to Europe, there was violent opposition from my mother, but she found I was in earnest, and now it is all settled for March. Uncle Guy knows Ernest Mortimer, and esteems him very highly, but thinks that I am the last woman in the United States who ought to be a minister's wife. I believe he told Ernest as much, but, of course, he did not believe him."

"How long have you known him?"

"About two years. I am rather afraid of him, to tell you the honest truth. He is so grave, and has such rigid notions, that I wonder very much what ever induced his holiness to fancy such a heedless piece of womanhood, as he is obliged to know I am; for I never put on any humility or sanctity. But you shall all see that I am worthy of Mr. Mortimer's love."

Her beautiful face was radiant with hope, yet in the violet eyes there lurked unshed tears.

"I am very glad that you are so happy, Pauline; and, if you will, I am very sure you can make yourself all that Mr. Mortimer could desire."

"I am resolved I will. Ernest is not dependent on his salary; his father is considered wealthy, I believe, which fact reconciles ma in some degree. To-morrow he will preach in Dr. Hew's church, and you must go to hear him. I have never yet heard him preach, and am rather anxious to know what sort of sermons I am to listen to for the remainder of my life."

"I shall certainly go to hear him," answered Beulah.

"Of course you will, and after service you must go home and spend the day with me. Ma begs that you will not refuse to dine with her; and, as you are engaged all the week, Uncle Guy expects you also; that is, he told me to insist on your coming, but thought you would probably decline. Will you come? Do say yes."

"I don't know yet. I will see you at church."

Thus they parted.

On Sabbath afternoon Beulah and Pauline sat at the parlor window discussing the various occurrences of their long separation. Pauline talked of her future—how bright it was; how very much she and Ernest loved each other, and how busy she would be when she had a home of her own. Beulah was much amused at the childlike simplicity with which she discussed her future, and began to think the whole affair rather ludicrous, when Pauline started, and exclaimed, as the blood dyed her cheeks:

“There is Ernest coming up the walk!”

He came in, and greeted her with gentle gravity. He was a dignified, fine-looking man, with polished manners, and perfect self-possession. He was highly cultivated in all his tastes, agreeable, and, in fine, a Christian gentleman. Pauline seemed to consider his remarks oracular, and Beulah wondered what singular freak induced this staid, learned clergyman to select a companion so absolutely antagonistic in every element of character. But a glance at Pauline’s perfectly beautiful face explained the mystery. How could anyone help loving her? she was so radiant and so winning in her unaffected artlessness. Beulah conjectured that they might, perhaps, entertain each other without her assistance, and soon left them for the greenhouse, which was connected with the parlors by a glass door. She saw Dr. Hartwell at the opposite end of the greenhouse. He was clipping the withered flowers from a luxuriant white japonica, the same that once furnished ornaments for her hair. Evidently he was rather surprised to see her there, but continued clipping the faded blossoms, and whistled to his dog. Charon acknowledged the invitation by another bark, but nestled his great head against Beulah, and stood quite still, while she passed her hand caressingly over him. She fancied a smile crossed her guardian’s lips, but when he turned toward her there was no trace of it, and he merely said:

“Where is Pauline?”

“In the parlor, with Mr. Mortimer.”

“Here are the scissors; cut as many flowers as you like.”

He held out the scissors, but she shook her head, and answered, hastily:

“Thank you, I do not want any.”

He looked at her searchingly, and, observing unshed tears in her eyes, said, in a kinder tone than he had yet employed:

“Beulah, what do you want?”

“Something that I almost despair of obtaining.”

“Did I ever refuse you anything you asked?” said he, looking down at the little hands on his arm, and at the pale, anxious face, with its deep, troubled eyes.

"No! and it is precisely for that reason that I ask assistance from you now."

"I suppose you are reduced to the last necessity. What has become of your pride, Beulah?"

"It is all here, in my heart, sir! thundering to me to walk out and leave you, since you are so unlike yourself."

He looked stern, and indescribably sad. She glanced up at his fascinating eyes, and then laying her head down on his arm, as she used to do in childhood, said, resolutely:

"Oh, sir! you must aid me. Whom have I to advise me but you?"

"My advice has about as much weight with you as Charon's would, could he utter it. I am an admirable counselor only so long as my opinions harmonize with the dictates of your own will. How am I to aid you? I went at twelve o'clock last night to see a dying man, and, passing along the street, saw a light burning from your window. Two hours later, as I returned, it glimmered there still. Why were you up? Beulah, what is the matter with you? Has your last treatise on the 'Origin of Ideas' run away with those of its author, and landed you both in a region of vagaries?"

"Something worse, sir."

"Perhaps German metaphysics has stranded you on the bleak, bald cliffs of Pyrrhonism?"

"But, sir, the questions which disturb my mind are older than my acquaintance with so-called philosophic works. They have troubled me from my childhood. Only show me the truth—the eternal truth, and I would give my life for it! Sir, how can you smile at such questions as these; questions involving the soul's destiny? One might fancy you a second Parrhasius."

She drew back a step or two, and regarded him anxiously, nay, pleadingly, as though he held the key to the Temple of Truth, and would not suffer her to pass the portal. A sarcastic smile lighted his Apollo-like face, as he answered:

"There is more truth in your metaphor than you imagined; *à la* Parrhasius, I do see you, a tortured Prometheus, chained by links of your own forging to the Caucasus of atheism. But listen to——"

"No, no; not that; not atheism! God save me from that deepest, blackest gulf!" She shuddered, and covered her face with her hands.

"Beulah, you alone must settle these questions with your own soul; my solutions would not satisfy you."

"Still, after a fashion, you have solved these problems; may I not know what your faith is?" said she, earnestly.

"Child, I have no faith! I know that I exist; that a beautiful universe surrounds me, and I am conscious of a multitude of conflicting emotions; but, like Launcelot Smith, I doubt

whether I am 'to pick and choose myself out of myself.' Further than this, I would assure you of nothing. Child, you are wasting your energies in vain endeavors to build up walls of foam, that——"

"Sir, I am no longer a child! I am a woman, and——"

"Yes, my little Beulah, and your woman's heart will not be satisfied long with these dim abstractions, which now you chase so eagerly. Mark me, there surely comes a time when you will loathe the bare name of metaphysics. You are making a very hotbed of your intellect, while your heart is daily becoming a dreary desert. Take care, lest the starvation be so complete that eventually you will be unable to reclaim it. Dialectics answer very well in collegiate halls, but will not content you. Remember 'Argemone.'"

"She is a miserable libel on woman's nature and intellect. I scorn the attempted parallel!" answered Beulah, indignantly.

"Very well; mark me, though, your intellectual pride will yet wreck your happiness."

He walked out of the greenhouse, whistling to Charon, who bounded after him. Beulah saw from the slanting sunlight that the afternoon was far advanced, and, feeling in no mood to listen to Pauline's nonsense, she found her bonnet and shawl, and repaired to the parlor to say good-by to the happy pair, who seemed unconscious of her long absence. As she left the house, the window of the study was thrown open, and Dr. Hartwell called out, carelessly:

"Wait, and let me order the carriage."

"No, thank you."

"I am going into town directly, and can take you home in the buggy."

"I will not trouble you; I prefer walking. Good-by."

CHAPTER XIX.

AMONG the number of gentlemen whom Beulah occasionally met at Dr. Asbury's house were two whose frequent visits and general demeanor induced the impression that they were more than ordinarily interested in the sisters. Frederick Vincent evinced a marked preference for Georgia, while Horace Maxwell was conspicuously attentive to Helen. The former was wealthy, handsome, indolent, and self-indulgent; the latter rather superior, as to business habits, which a limited purse peremptorily demanded. In fine, they were fair samples, perfect types of the numerous class of fashionable young men who throng all large cities. Good-looking, vain, impudent, heartless, frivolous, and dissipated; adepts at the gaming-table and

pistol gallery, ciphers in an intelligent, refined assembly. Notwithstanding manners of incorrigible effrontery which characterized their clique, the ladies always received them with marked expressions of pleasure, and the *entrée* of the "first circle" was certainly theirs.

Mrs. Asbury discovered, with keen sorrow and dismay, that Georgia was far more partial to Vincent than she had dreamed possible. She was thoroughly acquainted with the obstinacy which formed the stamen of Georgia's character, and very cautiously the maternal guidance must be given. She began by gravely regretting the familiar footing Mr. Vincent had acquired in her family, and urged upon Georgia and Helen the propriety of discouraging attentions that justified the world in joining their names. This had very little effect. She was conscious that, because of his wealth, Vincent was courted and flattered by the most select and fashionable of her circle of acquaintances, and knew, alas! that he was not more astray than the majority of the class of young men to which he belonged. With a keen pang, she saw that her child shrank from her, evaded her kind questions, and seemed to plunge into the festivities of the season with unwonted zest.

Beulah's quick eye readily discerned the state of affairs relative to Georgia and Vincent, and she could with difficulty restrain an expression of the disgust a knowledge of his character inspired. Vincent barely recognized her when they chanced to meet, and, of all his antipathies, hatred of Beulah predominated.

Cornelia Graham seemed for a time to have rallied all her strength, and attended parties and kept her place at the opera, with a regularity which argued a complete recovery. Antoinette Dupres was admired and flattered; the season was unusually gay. What if death had so lately held his awful assize in the city? Bereaved families wrapped their sable garments about lonely hearts, and wept over the countless mounds in the cemetery; but the wine-cup and song and dance went their accustomed rounds in fashionable quarters, and drink, dress, and be merry appeared the all-absorbing thought. Into this gayety Eugene Graham eagerly plunged; night after night was spent in one continued whirl.

Beulah had not seen Eugene for many days, and felt more than usually anxious concerning him, for little intercourse now existed between Cornelia and herself. One evening, however, as she stood before a glass and arranged her hair with more than ordinary care, she felt that she would soon have an opportunity of judging whether reports were true. If he indeed rushed along the highway to ruin, one glance would discover to her the fact. Dr. Asbury wished to give Pauline Chilton a party, and his own and Mrs. Asbury's kind persuasions induced

the orphan to consent to attend. The evening had arrived; she put on her simple Swiss muslin dress, without a wish for anything more costly, and entered the carriage her friends had sent to convey her to the house. The guests rapidly assembled; soon the rooms were thronged with merry people, whose moving to and fro prevented regular conversation. The brilliant chandeliers flashed down on rich silks and satins, gossamer fabrics, and diamonds which blazed dazzlingly. Her eyes followed Eugene's tall form as the circuit of the parlors was rapidly made, and he approached the corner where she had taken a seat. He held Antoinette close to his heart, and her head drooped very contentedly on his shoulder. He was talking to her as they danced, and his lips nearly touched her glowing cheek. On they came, so close to Beulah that his lovely partner's gauzy dress floated against her, and, as the music quickened, faster flew the dancers. Beulah looked on with a sensation of disgust, which might have been easily read in her countenance; verily she blushed for her degraded sex, and, sick of the scene, left the window and retreated to the library, where the more sedate portion of the guests were discussing various topics.

As usual, there was rushing and squeezing into the supper-room, and, waiting until the hall was comparatively deserted, she ran up to the dressing-room for her shawl, tired of the crowd and anxious to get home again. She remembered that she had dropped her fan behind one of the sofas in the parlor, and, as all were at supper, fancied she could obtain it unobserved, and entered the room for that purpose. A gentleman stood by the fire, but, without noticing him, she pushed the sofa aside, secured her fan, and was turning away, when a well-known voice startled her.

"Beulah, where are you going?"

"Home, sir."

"Have you spoken to Eugene to-night?"

"No."

Her guardian looked at her very intently, as if striving to read her soul, and said, slowly:

"Child, he and Antoinette are sitting in the front parlor. I happened to overhear a remark as I passed them. He is an accepted lover; they are engaged."

A quick shiver ran over Beulah's frame, and a dark frown furrowed her pale brow as she answered:

"I feared as much."

"Why should you fear, child? She is a beautiful heiress, and he loves her," returned Dr. Hartwell.

"No; he thinks he loves her, but it is not so. He is fascinated by her beauty, but I fear the day will come when, discovering her true character, he will mourn his infatuation. I know his nature, and I know, too, that she cannot make him

happy." She turned away, but he walked on with her to the carriage, handed her in, and said "good-night" as coldly as usual. Meantime, the rattle of plates, jingle of forks and spoons in the supper-room would have rendered all conversation impossible, had not the elevation of voices kept pace with the noise and confusion. At one end of the table, Cornelia Graham stood talking to a distinguished foreigner, who was spending a few days in the city. He was a handsome man, with fine colloquial powers, and seemed much interested in a discussion which he and Cornelia carried on relative to the society of American cities as compared with European. A temporary lull in the hum of voices allowed Cornelia to hear a remark made by a gentleman quite near her.

"Miss Laura, who did you say that young lady was that Mrs. Asbury introduced me to? The one with such magnificent hair and teeth?"

His companion was no other than Laura Martin, whose mother, having built an elegant house, and given several large parties, was now a "fashionable," *par excellence*. Laura elevated her nose very perceptibly, and answered:

"Oh, a mere nobody! Beulah Benton. I can't imagine how she contrived to be invited here. She is a teacher in the public school, I believe, but that is not the worst. She used to hire herself out as a servant. Indeed, it is a fact, she was my little brother's nurse some years ago. I think ma hired her for six dollars a month."

Cornelia grew white with anger, and the stranger asked, with a smile, if he should consider this a sample of the society she boasted of. Turning abruptly to Laura, she replied, with undisguised contempt:

"The fates forbid, Mr. Falconer, that you should judge American society from some of the specimens you may see here to-night. Misfortune placed Miss Benton, at an early age, in an orphan asylum, and while quite young she left it to earn a support. Mrs. Martin (this young lady's mother) hired her as a nurse; but she soon left this position, qualified herself to teach, and now, with a fine intellect thoroughly cultivated, is the pride of all who can appreciate true nobility of soul, and, of course, an object of envy and detraction to her inferiors, especially to some of our fashionable *parvenus*."

"I have some desire to become acquainted with one who could deserve such eulogy from you," answered the foreigner, somewhat amused at the course the conversation had taken, and quite satisfied that Americans were accustomed to correct false impressions in rather an abrupt manner.

"I will present you to her with great pleasure. She is not here; we must search for her." She took his arm, and they looked for Beulah from room to room; finally Dr. Hartwell in-

formed Cornelia that she had gone home, and, tired and out of humor, the latter excused herself, and prepared to follow her friend's example. Her father was deep in a game of whist, her mother unwilling to return home so soon, and Eugene and Antoinette—where were they? Dr. Hartwell saw her perplexed expression, and asked:

"Whom are you looking for?"

"Eugene."

"He is with your cousin on the west gallery. I will conduct you to them, if you wish it." He offered his arm, and noticed the scowl that instantly darkened her face. Unconsciously, her fingers grasped his arm tightly, and she walked on with a lowering brow. As they approached the end of the gallery, Cornelia saw that the two she sought stood earnestly conversing. Eugene's arm passed round Antoinette's waist. Dr. Hartwell watched his companion closely; the light from the window gleamed over her face, and showed it gray and rigid. Her white lips curled as she muttered:

"Let us take another turn before I speak to them."

Once more they approached the happy pair, and, leaning forward, Cornelia said, hoarsely:

"Eugene, my father is engaged; come home with me."

He looked up, and answered, carelessly: "Oh, you are leaving too early; can't you entertain yourself a little longer?"

"No, sir."

Her freezing tone startled him, and, for the first time, he noticed the haggard face, with its expression of angry scorn. Her eyes were fixed on Antoinette, who only smiled, and looked triumphantly defiant.

"Are you ill, Cornelia? Of course, I will take you home if you really desire it. Doctor, I must consign Miss Dupres to your care till I return."

Eugene by no means relished the expression of his sister's countenance. She bade Dr. Hartwell adieu, passed her arm through her brother's, and they proceeded to their carriage. The ride was short and silent. On reaching home, Eugene conducted Cornelia into the house, and was about to return, when she said, imperiously:

"A word with you before you go."

She entered the sitting-room, threw her wrappings on a chair, and began to divest herself of bracelets and necklace. Fastening her brilliant black eyes on his face, she said, sneeringly:

"Eugene Graham, did you learn dissimulation in the halls of Heidelberg?"

"What do you mean, Cornelia?"

"Where did you learn to deceive one who believed you pure and truthful as an archangel? Answer me that." Her whole face was a glare of burning scorn.

"Insulting insinuations are unworthy of you, and beneath my notice," he proudly replied.

"Well, then, take the more insulting truth! What crawling serpent of temptation induced you to tell me you expected to marry Beulah? No evasion! I will not be put off!"

"When I told you so, I expected to marry Beulah; not so much because I loved her, but because I supposed that she rather considered me bound to her by early ties. I discovered, however, that her happiness was not dependent on me, and, therefore, abandoned the idea."

"And my peerless cousin is to be your bride, eh?"

"Yes, she has promised me her hand at an early day."

"No doubt. You don't deserve anything better. Beulah scorns you; I see it in her eyes. Marry you! You! Oh, Eugene, she is too far superior to you. You are blind now; but the day will surely come when your charmer will, with her own hand, tear the veil from your eyes, and you will curse your folly. It is of no use to tell you that she is false, heartless, utterly unprincipled; you will not believe it, of course, till you find out her miserable defects yourself. You will blush for the name which, as your wife, Antoinette will disgrace. Now leave me."

She pointed to the door, and, too much incensed to reply, he quitted the room with a suppressed oath, slamming the door behind him. The ensuing day she was forced to listen to the complacent comments of her parents, who were well pleased with the alliance. Antoinette was to return home immediately, the marriage would take place in June, and they were all to spend the summer at the North; after which it was suggested that the young couple should reside with Mr. Graham. Cornelia was standing apart when her mother made this proposition, and, turning sharply toward the members of her family, the daughter exclaimed:

"Never! You all know that this match is utterly odious to me. Let Eugene have a house of his own; I have no mind to have Antoinette longer in my home. Nay, father; it will not be for a great while. When I am gone they can come; I rather think I shall not long be in their way. While I do live, let me be quiet, will you?"

Her burning, yet sunken eyes, ran over the group.

Eugene sprang up, and left the room; Antoinette put her embroidered handkerchief to dry eyes; Mrs. Graham looked distressed; and her husband wiped his spectacles. But the mist was in his eyes, and presently large drops fell over his cheeks as he looked at the face and form of his only child.

Cornelia saw his emotion; the great flood gate of her heart seemed suddenly lifted. She passed her white fingers over his gray hair, and murmured, brokenly:

"My father—my father! I have been a care and a sorrow to you all my life; I am very wayward and exacting, but bear with your poor child; my days are numbered. Father, when my proud head lies low in the silent grave, then give others my place."

He took her in his arms, and kissed her hollow cheek, saying, tenderly:

"My darling, you break my heart. What is there that I can do to make you happy?"

"Give Eugene a house of his own, and let me be at peace in my home. Will you do this for me?"

"Yes."

"Thank you, my father."

Disengaging his clasping arms, she left them.

A few days after the party at her house, Mrs. Asbury returned home from a visit to the asylum (of which she had recently been elected a manager). In passing the parlor door, she heard suppressed voices, looked in, and, perceiving Mr. Vincent seated near Georgia, retired, without speaking, to her own room. Securing the door, she sank on her knees, and besought an all-wise God to direct and aid her in her course of duty. When Mr. Vincent took leave, and Georgia had returned to her room, Mrs. Asbury sought her. She found her moody, and disposed to evade her questions. Passing her arm round her, she said, very gently:

"My dear child, let there be perfect confidence between us. My child, what has estranged you of late? What, but my love for you, and anxiety for your happiness, could induce me to object to your receiving Mr. Vincent's attentions?"

"You are prejudiced against him, and always were!"

"I judge the young man only from his conduct. You know—you are obliged to know—that he is recklessly dissipated, selfish, and immoral."

"He is no worse than other young men. I know very few who are not quite as wild as he is. Besides, he has promised to sign the temperance pledge, if I will marry him."

"My child, you pain me beyond expression. Does the depravity which prevails here sanction Vincent's dissipation? Oh, Georgia, has association deprived you of horror of vice? Can you be satisfied because others are quite as degraded? He does not mean what he promises."

"You are prejudiced," persisted Georgia.

"If I am, it is because of his profligacy! Can you possibly be attached to such a man?"

Georgia sobbed, and cried heartily. Her good sense told her that her mother was right. Georgia had always revered her mother; she knew she was invariably guided by principle; and now, as she listened to her earnest entreaties, all her ob-

stinacy melted away; throwing herself into her mother's arms, she begged her to forgive the pain and anxiety she had caused her. Mrs. Asbury pressed her to her heart, and silently thanked God for the success of her remonstrances. Of all this Dr. Asbury knew nothing. When Mr. Vincent called the following day, Georgia very decidedly rejected him. Understanding from her manner that she meant what she said, he became violently enraged; swore with a solemn oath that he would make her repent her trifling, took his hat, and left the house. This sufficed to remove any lingering tenderness from Georgia's heart; and from that hour, Fred Vincent darkened the home circle no more.

CHAPTER XX.

PAULINE's wedding day dawned clear and bright, meet for the happy event it was to chronicle. The ceremony was to be performed in church, at an early hour, to enable the newly-married pair to leave on the morning boat, and the building was crowded with the numerous friends assembled to witness the rites. The minister stood within the altar, and, after some slight delay, Mr. Mortimor led Pauline down the aisle. Dr. Hartwell and Mrs. Lockhart stood near the altar. Mr. Lockhart's indisposition prevented his attendance. Satin, blonde, and diamonds were discarded; Pauline was dressed in a gray traveling habit, and wore a plain, drab traveling bonnet.

It was a holy, a touching bridal. The morning sunshine, stealing through the lofty, arched windows, fell on her pure brow with dazzling radiance, and lent many a golden wave to the silky, clustering curls. Pauline was marvelously beautiful; the violet eyes were dewy with emotion, and her ripe, coral lips wreathed with a smile of trembling joyousness. Only a few words were uttered by the clergyman, and Pauline, the careless, high-spirited girl, stood there a wife.

The carriage was whirled away, and Beulah walked on to her schoolroom, with a dim foreboding that when she again met the beautiful, warm-hearted girl, sunshine might be banished from her face. Days, weeks, and months passed by. Beulah had little leisure, and this was employed with the most rigid economy. The editor of the magazine found that her articles were worth remuneration, and consequently a monthly contribution had to be copied, and sent in at stated intervals. Thus engaged, spring glided into summer, and once more a June sun beamed on the city. One Saturday she accompanied Clara to a jewelry store to make some trifling purchase, and saw Eugene Graham leaning over the counter, looking at some sets of pearls and diamonds. He did not perceive her immediately, and she

had an opportunity of scanning his countenance unobserved. Her lip trembled as she noticed the flushed face and inflamed eyes, and saw that the hand which held a bracelet was very unsteady. He looked up, started, and greeted her with evident embarrassment. She waited until Clara had completed her purchase, and then said, quietly:

"Eugene, are you going away without coming to see me?"

"Why, no; I had intended calling yesterday, but was prevented, and I am obliged to leave this afternoon. By the way, help me to select between these two pearl sets. I suppose you can imagine their destination?"

It was the first time he had alluded to his marriage, and she answered, with an arch smile:

"Oh, yes! I dare say I might guess very accurately. It would not require Yankee ingenuity."

She examined the jewels, and, after giving an opinion as to their superiority, turned to go, saying:

"I want to see you a few moments before you leave the city. I am going home immediately, and any time during the day, when you can call, will answer."

He looked curious, glanced at his watch, pondered an instant, and promised to call in an hour.

She bowed and returned home, with an almost intolerable weight on her heart. She sat with her face buried in her hands, collecting her thoughts, and, when summoned to meet Eugene, went down with a firm heart, but trembling frame. He seemed restless and ill at ease, yet curious withal, and, after some trifling commonplace remarks, Beulah seated herself on the sofa beside him, and said:

"Eugene, why have you shunned me so pertinaciously since your return from Europe?"

"I have not shunned you, Beulah; you are mistaken. I have been engaged, and therefore could visit but little."

"Oh, Eugene! be honest—be honest! Say at once you shunned me lest I should mark your altered habits in your altered face. But I know it all, notwithstanding. It is no secret that Eugene Graham has more than once lent his presence to midnight carousals over the wine cup. Oh, Eugene! I understand why you have carefully shunned one who has an unconquerable horror of that degradation in which you have fallen. I am your friend; your best and most disinterested friend. What do your fashionable acquaintances care that your moral character is impugned, and your fair name tarnished? Your dissipation keeps their brothers and lovers in countenance; your once noble, unsullied nature would shame their depravity."

She wept bitterly, and more moved than he chose to appear, Eugene shaded his face with his fingers. Beulah placed her hand on his shoulder, and continued, falteringly:

"Eugene, I am not afraid to tell you the unvarnished truth. You may get angry, and think it is no business of mine to counsel you, who are older and master of your own fate; but when we were children I talked to you freely, and why should I not now? True friendship strengthens with years, and shall I hesitate to speak to you of what gives me so much pain? In a very few days you are to be married; Eugene, if the wine cup is dearer to you than your beautiful bride, what prospect of happiness have either of you? I had hoped her influence would deter you from it, at least during her visit here; but if not then, how can her presence avail in future? Oh, for Heaven's sake! for Antoinette's, for your own, quit the ranks of ruin you are in, and come back to temperance and honor. You are bowing down Cornelia's proud head in sorrow. Oh, Eugene, have mercy on yourself!"

He tried to look haughty and, shaking off her hand, answered proudly:

"If I am the degraded character you flatteringly pronounce me, it should certainly render my society anything but agreeable to your fastidious taste. I shall not soon forget your unmerited insults."

He took his hat and turned toward the door, but she placed herself before it, and, holding out both hands, exclaimed:

"Do not let us part in anger! I am an orphan, without relatives or protectors, and from early years you have been a kind brother. At least, let us part as friends. I know that in future we shall be completely alienated, but your friend Beulah will always rejoice to hear of your welfare and happiness; and if her warning words, kindly meant, have no effect, and she hears, with keen regret, of your final ruin, she at least will feel that she honestly and anxiously did all in her power to save you. Good-by. Shake hands, Eugene, and bear with you to the altar my sincere wishes for your happiness."

She held out her hands entreatingly, but he took no notice of the movement, and, hurrying by, left the house. For a moment Beulah bowed her head and sobbed; then she brushed the tears from her cheek, and the black brows met in a heavy frown. True, she had not expected much else, yet she felt bitterly grieved, and it was many months ere she ceased to remember the pain of this interview; notwithstanding the contempt, she could not avoid feeling for his weakness.

The Grahams all accompanied Eugene, and, after the marriage, went North for the summer. A handsome house was erected near Mr. Graham's residence, and in the fall the young people were to take possession of it. Mr. Lockhart rallied sufficiently to be removed to his home "up the country," and, save Dr. Asbury's family, Beulah saw no one but Clara and her pupils. With July came the close of the session, and the young

teacher was free again. One afternoon she put on her bonnet and walked to a distant section of the town, to inquire after Kate Ellison (one of her assistant teachers), who, she happened to hear, was quite ill. She found her even worse than she had expected, and, on offering her services to watch over the sick girl, was anxiously requested to remain with her during the night. About dusk, Beulah left her charge in a sound sleep, and, cautiously opening the blinds, seated herself on the window-sill. A buggy drew up beneath the window—she supposed it was the family physician.

She knew not what doctor Mrs. Ellison employed, and, as her guardian entered, she drew back with a start of surprise. She had not seen him since the morning of Pauline's marriage, five months before, and then he had not noticed her. Now he stopped suddenly, looked at her a moment, and said, as if much chagrined:

"What are you doing here, Beulah?"

"Nursing Kate, sir. Don't talk so loud; she is asleep," answered Beulah, rather frigidly.

She did not look at him, but knew his eyes were on her face, and presently he said:

"You are always where you ought not to be. That girl has typhus fever, and, ten to one, you will take it. In the name of common sense! why don't you let people take care of their own sick, and stay at home, instead of hunting up cases like a professed nurse? I suppose the first confirmed case of small-pox you hear of you will hasten to offer your services. You don't intend to spend the night here, it is to be hoped?"

"Her mother has been sitting up so constantly that she is completely exhausted, and somebody must assist in nursing Kate. I did not know that she had any contagious disease, but if she has, I suppose I might as well run the risk."

"Oh! if you choose to risk your life, it is your own affair. Do not imagine for an instant that I expected my advice to weigh an iota with you."

He walked off to Kate, felt her pulse, and, without waking her, proceeded to replenish the glass of medicine on the table. Beulah was in no mood to obtrude herself on his attention; she went to the window, and stood with her back to him. She was surprised when he came up to her, and said, abruptly:

"To-day I read an article in *T——'s Magazine*, called the 'Inner Life, by Delta.'"

"Well! what do I care for the article in *T——'s Magazine*?" These words were jerked out, as it were, with something like a sneer.

"You care more than you will ever be brought to confess. Have you read this precious 'Inner Life'?"

"Oh, yes!"

This "Inner Life," which she had written for the last number of the magazine, was an allegory, in which she boldly attempted to disprove the truth of the fact Tennyson had so inimitably embodied in "The Palace of Art," namely, that love of beauty, and intellectual culture, cannot satisfy the God-given aspirations of the soul. Her guardian fully comprehended the dawning, and as yet unacknowledged dread which prompted this article, and, hastily laying his hand on her shoulder, he said:

"Ah, proud girl! you are struggling desperately with your heart. You, too, have reared a 'palace' on dreary, almost inaccessible crags; and because already you begin to weary of your isolation, you would fain hurl invectives at Tennyson, who explores your mansion, 'so royal, rich, and wide,' and discovers the grim specters that dwell with you! You were very miserable when you wrote that sketch; you are not equal to what you have undertaken. Child, this year of trial and loneliness has left its impress on your face. Are you not yet willing to give up the struggle?"

The moon had risen, and as its light shone on her countenance, he saw a fierce blaze in her eyes he had never noticed there before. She shook off his light touch, and answered:

"No! I will never give up!"

He smiled, and left her.

She remained with her sick friend until sunrise the next morning, and ere she left the house was rewarded by the assurance that she was better. In a few days Kate was decidedly convalescent. Beulah did not take typhus fever.

CHAPTER XXI.

ONE afternoon in October the indisposition of one of her music pupils released Beulah earlier than usual, and she determined to seize this opportunity and visit the asylum. Of the walk across the common she never wearied.

As she drew near the asylum gate, memory began to pass its fingers over her heart; but here, too, sounds of gladness met her. The orphans were assembled on the lawn in front of the building, chatting as cheerfully as though they were all members of one family. The little ones trundled hoops, and chased each other up and down the graveled walks; some of the boys tossed their balls, and a few of the larger girls were tying up chrysanthemums to slender stakes. To many of them Beulah was well known. The children told her that their matron had been sick and was not yet quite well, and, needing no pilot, Beulah went through the house in search of her. She found

her at last in the storeroom, giving out materials for the evening meal. She was pale and thin, and her sharpened features wore a depressed, weary expression; but, turning round, she perceived Beulah, and a glad smile broke instantly over her countenance as she clasped the girl's hand in both hers.

"Dear child, I have looked for a long time. I did not think you would wait so many weeks."

"I did not know you had been sick until I came and heard the children speak of it. You should have sent me word. I see you have not entirely recovered."

"No, I am quite feeble yet; but in time I hope I shall be well again. Ah, Beulah, I have wanted to see you so much! so much! Child, it seems to me I shall never get used to being separated from you."

"I love to come here occasionally; it does me good; but not too often; that would be painful, you know."

Beulah spoke in a subdued voice, while memory painted the evening when Eugene had sought her in this apartment, and wiped away her tears for Lilly's absence.

"Beulah, they tell me Eugene is married."

"Yes, he was married nearly five months ago."

"Did you see his wife?"

"Yes; she is a very pretty woman. I may say a beautiful woman; but she does not suit him."

"Oh, heiresses are always beautiful and charming in the eyes of the world! Beulah, do you know that I watched for Eugene for days and weeks and months, after his return from Europe? I wanted to see him—oh, so much! I loved you both as though you were my own children. I was so proud of that boy! I had raised him from a crawling infant, and never dreamed that he would forget me. But he did not come. I have not seen him since he left, six years ago, for Germany. Oh, the boy has pained me—pained me! I loved him so much!"

Beulah's brow clouded heavily, as she said:

"It is better so—better that you should not see him. He is not what he was when he quitted us."

"It is true, then, that he drinks—that he is wild and dissipated? I heard it once, but would not believe it."

"Yes, he drinks—not to stupid intoxication, but too freely for his health and character."

"God help the boy! I have prayed for him for years, and I shall pray for him still, though he has forgotten me."

She sobbed and covered her face with her apron.

"I shall leave here very soon," said Mrs. Williams.

"Leave the asylum! for what?"

"I am getting old, child, and my health is none of the best. The duties are very heavy here, and I am not willing to occupy the position unless I could discharge all the duties faith-

fully. I have sent in my resignation to the managers, and as soon as they succeed in getting another matron, I shall leave the asylum."

"What are you going to do?"

"I have means enough to live plainly the remainder of my life. I intend to rent or buy a small house."

"Do you intend to live alone?"

"Yes, child; except a servant, I suppose I shall be quite alone. But you will come to see me often, and perhaps Eugene will remember me some day, when he is in trouble."

"No, I shall not come to see you at all! I mean to come and live with you—that is, if I may?" cried Beulah.

"God bless you, dear child, how glad I shall be!"

Beulah gently put back the gray locks that had fallen from the border of her cap, and said, hopefully:

"I am sick of boarding—sick of town! Let us get a nice little house, where I can walk in and out to my school. Have you selected any particular place?"

"No. I have looked at two or three, but none suited me exactly. Now you can help me. Will you come as soon as I can be released here?"

"Yes, just as soon as you are ready for me; and I think I know a house for rent which will just suit us. Now, I want it understood that I am to pay the rent."

"Oh, Beulah! you are not in earnest?"

"Yes, I am; so say no more about it. I will come on no other condition. I will see the owner of the house, ascertain what I can obtain it for, and send you word. Then you can look at it, and decide."

"I am quite willing to trust it to you, child; only I can't bear the thought of your paying the rent for it."

"Well, be sure you get a good servant, and now I must go."

She put on her bonnet and shawl with unwonted haste, and ran down the steps. In her frequent walks, she had noticed two cottages in course of erection, not very far from the pine grove in front of the asylum. The lots were small, and belonged to Dr. Asbury, who said he would build a couple of cottages for poor families to rent at cheap rates. As Beulah approached the houses, she saw the doctor's buggy standing near the door, and, thinking it a good omen, quickened her steps. Each building contained only three rooms and a hall, with a gallery, or rather portico in front. They were genuine *cottages orné*, built after Downing's plans, and presented a tasteful, inviting appearance. The windows were arched, and the woodwork elaborately carved. Beulah pushed open the freshly-painted gate, ran up the steps and into the hall. The carpenters were still at work in the kitchen, and, as she conjectured, here she found her friend, giving some final direc-

tions. She looked round the snug little kitchen, and, walking up to Dr. Asbury, who stood with his back to the door, she shook his hand, with a cheerful salutation.

"Halloo, Beulah! where did you drop from? glad to see you. Glad to see you. How came you prying into my new houses? Answer me that! Did you see my spouse as you came through the hall?"

"No, I will go back and hunt for her——"

"You need not; there she comes down the steps of the house. She would insist on seeing about some shelves for this precious kitchen; thinks I am bound to put pantries, and closets, and shelves all over the house for my future tenants. I suppose before the first poor family takes possession, I shall be expected to fill the closet with table-linen and cutlery, and the larder with sugar, flour, and wax candles. Look here, Mrs. Asbury, how many more shelves is this kitchen to have?"

"It is well she has a conscience, sir, since nature denied you one," answered Beulah, whom Mrs. Asbury received very affectionately.

"Conscience! Bless my soul! she has none, as regards my unlucky purse. Hey, Beulah, no whispering there! You look as wise as an owl. What am I to do next? Paper the walls, and fresco the ceilings? Out with it."

"I want to ask, sir, how much rent your conscience will allow you to demand for this pigeon-box of a house?"

"Well, I had an idea of asking two hundred dollars for it. Cheap enough at that. You may have it for two hundred," said he, with a good-humored nod toward Beulah.

"Very well, I will take it at that, provided Mrs. Williams likes it as well as I do. In a day or two I will determine."

"In the name of common sense, Beulah, what freak is this?" said the doctor, looking at her with astonishment.

"I am going to live with the matron of the asylum, whom you know very well. I think this house will suit us exactly, and the rent suits my purse far better than a larger building would. I am tired of boarding. I want a little home of my own, where, when the labors of school are over, I can feel at ease. The walk twice a day will benefit me."

"What does Hartwell think of this project?"

"I have not consulted him."

"The plain English of which is that, whether he approves or condemns, you are determined to carry out this new plan? Take care, Beulah; remember the old adage about 'cutting off your nose to spite your face.'"

"Rather mal apropos, Dr. Asbury," said she, indifferently.

"I am an old man, Beulah, and know something of life and the world."

"Nay, George: why dissuade her from this plan? If she

prefers this quiet little home, to the confinement and bustle of a boarding-house, if she thinks she would be happier here with Mrs. Williams, than in the heart of the city, why should not she come? Suffer her to judge for herself. I am disposed to applaud her choice," interrupted Mrs. Asbury.

"Well, well; if you soon weary of this freak you can easily give up the house, that is all. Now, Beulah, if you determine to take it, rest assured I will gladly make any additions or alterations you may suggest. Come, it is too late now to go over the rooms again; to-morrow will do as well. Beulah, are you going to play cook, too?"

"No, indeed! Mrs. Williams will find us a servant. Good-by. I will decide about the house as soon as possible."

The following day she dispatched a note to the matron, with information concerning the house; and one cold, clear day in November Beulah was notified that Mrs. Williams was comfortably settled in the new home. She went to school as usual, and, when the recitations were ended, started out with a glad heart and springing step. In half an hour she reached the little white gate, and found Mrs. Williams waiting there to welcome her. Everything was new and neat; the tastefully-selected carpets were not tapestry, but cheap ingrain; the snowy curtains were of plain dimity, with rose-colored borders, and the tea-table held, instead of costly Sèvres, simple white china, with a band of gilt. A bright fire crackled and glowed in the chimney, and, as Beulah stood on the hearth and glanced round the comfortable little room, which was to be both parlor and dining-room, she felt her heart thrill with delight, and exclaimed:

"This is home! at last I feel that I have a home of my own. Not the Rothschilds are so happy as I!"

The evening passed quickly, and when she retired to her own room she was surprised to find a handsome rosewood bookcase and desk occupying one corner. She opened the glass doors and saw her books carefully arranged on the shelves. Could her guardian have sent it? No, since her refusal of the watch, she felt sure he would not have offered it. A small note lay on the shelf, and, recognizing the delicate handwriting, she read the lines, containing these words:

"BEULAH: Accept the accompanying case and desk, as a slight testimony of the affection of your sincere friend,

"ALICE ASBURY."

Tears sprang into her eyes as she opened the desk and discovered an elegant pen and pencil, and every convenience connected with writing. Turning away, she saw beside the fire a large, deep easy-chair, cushioned with purple morocco, and

knew it was exactly like one she had often seen in Dr. Asbury's library. On the back was pinned a narrow slip of paper, and she read, in the doctor's scrawling, quaint writing:

"Child, don't be too proud to use it."

She was not; throwing herself into the luxurious chair, she broke the seal of a letter received that day from Pauline Mortimer. Once before, soon after her marriage, a few lines of gay greeting had come, and then many months had elapsed. As she unfolded the sheet, she saw, with sorrow, that in several places it was blotted with tears; and the contents, written in a paroxysm of passion, disclosed a state of wretchedness which Beulah little suspected. Pauline's impulsive, fitful nature was clearly indexed in the letter, and, after a brief apology for her long silence, she wrote as follows:

"Oh, Beulah, I am so miserable; so very, very wretched! Beulah, Ernest does not love me! You will scarcely believe me. Oh, I hardly know how to believe it myself! Uncle Guy was right; I do not suit Ernest; but I loved him so very, very dearly; and thought him so devoted to me. Fool that I was! my eyes are opened at last. Beulah, it nearly drives me wild, to think that I am bound to him for life, an unloved wife. Not a year has passed since our marriage, yet already he has tired of my 'pretty face.' Oh, Beulah, if I could only come to you, and put my arms around your neck, and lay my poor, weary head down on your shoulder, then I could tell you all——"

Here several sentences were illegible from tears, and she could only read what followed.

"Since yesterday morning, Ernest has not spoken to me. While I write, he is sitting in the next room, reading, as cold, indifferent and calm as if I were not perfectly wretched. He is tyrannical; and because I do not humor all his whims, and have some will of my own, he treats me with insulting indifference. He is angry now, because I resented some of his father's impertinent speeches about my dress. This is not the first, nor the second time that we have quarreled. He has an old maid sister, who is forever meddling about my affairs, and sneering at my domestic arrangements; and because I finally told her I believed I was mistress of my own house, Ernest has never forgiven me. Ellen (the sister I loved, and went to school with) has married, and moved to a distant part of the State. The other members of his family are bigoted, proud and parsimonious, and they have chiefly made the breach between us. Oh, Beulah, If I could only undo the past, and be Pauline Chilton once more! Oh, if I could be free and happy again! But there is no prospect of that. I am his wife, as he told me yesterday, and suppose I must drag out a miserable existence. Yet I will not be trampled on by his family! His sister spends much of her time with us; reads to Ernest; talks to him about things that she glories in telling me I don't understand the first word of. Beulah, I was anxious to study, and make myself a companion for him, but, try as I may,

Lucy contrives always to fret and thwart me. Two days ago she nearly drove me beside myself with her sneers and allusions to my great mental inferiority to Ernest (as if I were not often enough painfully reminded of the fact, without any of her assistance!) I know I should not have said it, but I was too angry to think of propriety, and told her that her presence in my home was very disagreeable. Oh, if you could have seen her insulting smile, as she answered, that her 'noble brother needed her, and she felt it a duty to remain with him.' Beulah, I love my husband; I would do anything on earth to make him happy, if we were left to ourselves, but as to submitting to Lucy's arrogance and sneers, I will not! Ernest requires me to apologize to his father and sister, and I told him I would not! I would die first! If it were only Ernest, I could bring myself to 'obey' him, for I love him very devotedly; but as to being dictated to by all his relatives, I never will! Beulah, burn this blurred letter, don't let anybody know how drearily I am situated. I am too proud to have my misery published. To know that people pitied me, would kill me. I never can be happy again, but perhaps you can help me to be less miserable. Do write to me! Oh, how I wish you could come to me! I charge you, Beulah, don't let Uncle Guy know that I am not happy. Good-by. Oh, if ever you marry, be sure your husband has no old maid sisters, and no officious kin! I am crying so, that I can barely see the lines. Good-by, dear Beulah,

PAULINE."

Beulah leaned forward and dropped the letter into the glowing mass of coals. It shriveled, blazed, and vanished, and, with a heavy sigh, she sat pondering the painful contents. "So much for a union of uncongenial natures," thought Beulah, as she prepared to answer the unlucky letter. As guardedly as possible, she alluded to Mr. Mortimor and his family, and urged Pauline to talk to her husband gently, but firmly, and assure him that the continued interference of his family was unendurable. If her remonstrances proved futile, to do what she considered due to herself as mistress of her own establishment, and try not to notice the annoyance of others. Beulah felt and acknowledged her inability to advise the young wife in the difficult position in which she was placed, and closed by assuring her that only her own good sense, guided by sincere love for her husband, could rightly direct her course. She was warmly attached to Pauline, and it was with a troubled heart that she addressed her reply.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE Grahams were all at home again, and Eugene and his bride had been for several weeks fairly settled in their elegant new house. Beulah had seen none of the family since their return, for her time was nearly all occupied, and as soon

as released from school, she gladly hurried out to her little home. One evening, as she left the academy, Mr. Graham's spirited horses dashed up to the gate, and the coachman handed her a note. It was from Mrs. Graham.

"MISS BENTON: Cornelia is quite indisposed, and begs that you will call and see her this afternoon. As it threatens rain, I send the carriage.
S. GRAHAM."

Mrs. Graham met her at the door, and greeted her more cordially than she had on any previous occasion. She looked anxious and weary, and said, as she led the way to her daughter's apartment:

"We are quite uneasy about Cornelia; you will find her sadly altered." She ushered Beulah into the room, then immediately withdrew.

Cornelia was propped up by cushions and pillows in her easy-chair; her head was thrown back, and her gaze appeared to be riveted on a painting which hung opposite. Beulah stood beside her a moment, unnoticed, and saw with painful surprise the ravages which disease had made in the once beautiful face and queenly form. Her wasted hands, grasping the arms of the chair, might have served as a model for a statue of death, so thin, pale, almost transparent. Beulah softly touched one of them, and said:

"Cornelia, you wished to see me."

The invalid looked at her intently, and smiled.

"I thought you would come. Ah, Beulah, do you recognize this wreck as your former friend?"

"I was not prepared to find you so changed. Do you suffer much?"

"Suffer! Yes, almost all the time; but it is not the bodily torture that troubles me so much—I could bear that in silence. It is my mind, Beulah; my mind."

She pointed to a chair; Beulah drew it near her, and Cornelia continued:

"I thought I should die suddenly, but it is to be otherwise. The torture is slow, lingering. Have you seen Eugene recently?"

"Not since his marriage."

A bitter laugh escaped Cornelia's lips, as she writhed an instant, and then said:

"I knew how it would be. I shall not live to see the end, but you will. Ha! Beulah, already he has discovered his mistake. I did not expect it so soon; I fancied Antoinette had more policy. She has dropped the mask. He sees himself wedded to a woman completely devoid of truth; he knows her now as she is: as I tried to show him she was, before it was

too late; and, Beulah, as I expected, he has grown reckless—desperate. Ah, if you could have witnessed a scene at the St. Nicholas, in New York, not long since, you would have wept over him. He found his bride heartless; saw that she preferred the society of other gentlemen to his; and one evening, on coming home to the hotel, found she had gone to the opera with a party she knew he detested. Beulah, it sickens me when I think of his fierce railings, and anguish, and scorn. He drank in mad defiance, and, when she returned, greeted her with imprecations that would have bowed any other woman, in utter humiliation, into the dust. She laughed derisively, told him he might amuse himself as he chose, she would not heed his wishes as regarded her own movements.”

She closed her eyes and groaned.

“What induced her to marry him?” asked Beulah.

“Only her false heart knows. But I have always believed she was chiefly influenced by a desire to escape from the strict discipline to which her father subjected her at home. Her mother was anything but a model of propriety; and her mother’s sister, who was Dr. Hartwell’s wife, was not more exemplary. My uncle endeavored to curb Antoinette’s dangerous fondness for display and dissipation, and she fancied that, as Eugene’s wife, she could freely plunge into gayeties which were sparingly allowed her at home.”

Her breathing was quick and difficult, and two crimson spots burned on her sallow cheeks. Her whole face told of years of bitterness, and a grim defiance of death, which sent a shudder through Beulah as she listened to the panting breath. Cornelia saturated her handkerchief with some delicate perfume from a crystal vase, and, passing it over her face, continued:

“They tell me it is time I should be confirmed; talk vaguely of seeing preachers, and taking the sacrament, and preparing myself, as if I could be frightened into religion and the church. My mother seems just to have waked up to a knowledge of my spiritual condition, as she calls it. Ah, Beulah, it is all dark before me; black, black as midnight! I am going down to an eternal night.”

“Cornelia, do you fear death?”

“No, not exactly. I am glad I am so soon to be rid of my vexed, joyless life; but you know it is all a dark mystery; and sometimes, when I recollect how I felt in my childhood, I shrink from the final dissolution. I have no hopes of a blissful future, such as cheer some people in their last hour. Of what comes after death, I know and believe nothing. Occasionally I shiver at the thought of annihilation; but if, after all, Revelation is true, I have something worse than annihilation to fear. You know the history of my skepticism; it is

the history of hundreds in this age. The inconsistencies of professing Christians disgusted me. I have never known but one exception. Mrs. Asbury is a consistent Christian. I have watched her, under various circumstances; I have tempted her, in divers ways, to test her; and to-day, skeptic as I am, I admire and revere that noble woman. If all Christians set an example as pure and bright as hers, there were less infidelity and atheism in the land. Beulah, a year ago we talked of these things; I was then, as now, hopeless of creeds, of truth, but you were sure you would find the truth. Where is your truth? Show it to me?"

She twined her thin, hot fingers round Beulah's cold hand, and spoke in a weary tone. The orphan's features twitched an instant, and the old troubled look came back, as she said:

"I wish I could help you, Cornelia. It must be terrible, indeed, to stand on the brink of the grave and have no belief in anything. I would give more than I possess to be able to assist you, but I cannot; I have no truth to offer you; I have yet discovered nothing for myself."

"You will not; you will not. It is all mocking mystery, and, no more than the aggregated generations of the past, can you find any solution."

"Philosophy promises one," replied Beulah, resolutely.

"Philosophy? take care; that hidden rock stranded me. I am older than you; I am a sample of the efficacy of such systems. Oh, the so-called philosophers of this century and the last are crowned heads of humbug! Have done with them, Beulah, or you will be miserably duped."

"Have you lost faith in Emerson and Theodore Parker?"

"Yes, lost faith in everything and everybody except Mrs. Asbury. But no more of this, Beulah—so long as you have found nothing to rest upon. I had hoped much from your earnest search, but, since it has been futile, let the subject drop. Give me that glass of medicine. Dr. Hartwell was here, just before you came; he is morose and haggard; what ails him?"

"I really don't know. I have not seen him for several months—not since August, I believe."

"Beulah, I was in pain last night, and could not sleep, and for hours I seemed to hear the words of that horrible vision: 'And he saw how world after world shook off its glimmering souls upon the sea of Death, as a water bubble scatters swimming lights on the waves.' Oh! my mind is clouded and my heart hopeless; it is dismal to stand alone as I do, and confront the final issue, without belief in anything."

Beulah was deeply moved, and answered, with a faltering voice and trembling lip:

"I wish I could comfort and cheer you, but I cannot—I

cannot! If the hand of disease placed me to-day on the brink beside you, I should be as hopeless as you. Oh, Cornelia! it makes my heart ache to look at you now, and I would give my life to be able to stand where you do, with a calm trust in the God of Israel; but——”

“Then, be warned by my example. In many respects we resemble each other; our pursuits have been similar. Beulah, do not follow me to the end! Take my word for it, all is dark and grim.”

She sank back, too much exhausted to continue the conversation, and Beulah rose to go.

“Can’t you stay with me?” said the feeble girl.

“No my companionship is no benefit to you now. If I could help you, I would not leave you at all.”

She pressed her lips to the forehead, furrowed by suffering, and hastened away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. GRAHAM sat by his daughter’s bed, with his elbow resting on her pillow, and his head drooped on his hand. It was noon, and sunshine sparkled out of doors, but here the heavy curtains swept across the windows, and cast a lurid light over the sick room. The restless sufferer threw up her arms over the pillow, and turning toward him, said in a voice sharpened by disease:

“Has mother gone? I want to say something to you.”

“We are alone, my child; speak to me freely.”

“There are a few things I wish to have arranged, and my time is short. You have never refused me any gratification I desired, and I know you will grant my last request. Father, I have always been considered an heiress, and I want to know how much I would be entitled to if I should live? Of course, Eugene has an equal share; how much is it?”

“About eighty thousand dollars apiece, I suppose, leaving as much for your mother. Why do you ask, my daughter?”

“Eighty thousand dollars. How much good might be done with it, if judiciously distributed and invested? Father, I shall not live to squander it in frivolous amusements, or superfluous luxuries. Are you willing that I should dispose of a portion of it before my death?”

“Yes, Cornelia, if it will afford you any gratification. My poor afflicted child: how can I deny you anything you choose to ask!”

She put up one arm around his neck, and, drawing his head close to her, said, earnestly:

“I only wish to use a part of it. Father, I want to leave

Beulah about five thousand dollars. That sum will enable her to live more comfortably, and labor less, and I should like to feel, before I die, that I had been the means of assisting her. Will you see that it is arranged so that she will certainly receive it, no matter what happens?"

"Yes, I promise you that she shall have five thousand dollars, to dispose of as she thinks proper."

"Then I want five thousand more given to the Orphan Asylum. Give it in your own name. You only have the right to give. Don't have my name mentioned in the matter. Will you promise me this, also?"

"Yes, it shall be done. Is there anything else?"

"Thank you; that is all as regards money matters. Raise my pillow a little; there, that will do. Father, can't you do something to save Eugene?"

"Recently I have expostulated with him, and he seemed disposed to reform his habits. Acknowledged that his associations had been injurious, and regretted the excesses into which he came from college, but I think, now he is married, he will sober down. That is one reason why I encouraged his marrying so early."

"Father, Antoinette is not the woman to reform him. Don't trust to her influence; if you do, Eugene will be ruined. Watch over him closely yourself; try to win him away from the haunts of dissipation; I tell you now his wife will never do it. She has duped you and my mother as to her character, but you will find that she is as utterly heartless as her own mother was. I always opposed the match, because I probed her mask of dissimulation, and knew that Eugene could not be happy with her. But the mistake is irretrievable, and it only remains for you to watch him the more carefully. Lift me, father, I can't breathe easily. There is the doctor on the steps; I am too tired to talk any more to-day."

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One week later, as Beulah was spending her Sabbath evening in her own apartment, she was summoned to see her friend for the last time. It was twilight when she reached Mr. Graham's house and glided noiselessly up the thickly carpeted stairway. The bells were all muffled, and a solemn stillness reigned over the mansion. She left her bonnet and shawl in the hall, and softly entered the chamber unaccompanied. Unable to breathe in a horizontal position, Cornelia was bolstered up in her easy-chair. Her mother sat near her, with her face hid on her husband's bosom. Dr. Hartwell leaned against the mantel, and Eugene stood on the hearth opposite him, with his head bowed down on his hands. Cornelia drew her breath in quick gasps, and cold drops glistened on her pallid face.

Her sunken eyes wandered over the group, and when Beulah drew near she extended her hands eagerly, while a shadowy smile passed swiftly over her sharpened features.

"Beulah, come close to me—close." She grasped her hands tightly, and Beulah knelt at the side of her chair.

"Beulah, in a little while I shall be at rest. You will rejoice to see me free from pain, won't you? I have suffered for so many months and years. But death is about to release me forever. Beulah, is it forever?—is it forever? Am I going down into an eternal sleep, on a marble couch, where grass and flowers will wave over me, and the sun shine down on me? Yes, it must be so. Who has ever waked from this last dreamless slumber? Abel was the first to fall asleep, and since then, who has wakened? No one. Earth is full of pale sleepers; and I am soon to join the silent band."

There was a flickering light in her eyes, like the flame of a candle low in its socket, and her panting breath was painful to listen to.

"Cornelia, they say Jesus of Nazareth slept, and woke again; if so, you will——"

"Ha, but you don't believe that, Beulah. They say, they say! Yes, but I never believed them before, and I don't want to believe them now. I will not believe it. It is too late to tell me that now. Beulah, I shall know very soon; the veil of mystery is being lifted."

"Calm yourself, Cornelia. If Christianity is true, God will see that you were honest in your skepticism, and judge you leniently. If not, then, death is annihilation, and you have nothing to dread; you will sink into quiet oblivion of all your griefs."

"Annihilation! then I shall see you all no more? Oh, why was I every created, to love others, and then be torn away forever, and go back to senseless dust? I never have been happy; I have always had aspirations after purer, higher enjoyments than earth could afford me, and must they be lost in dead clay? Oh, Beulah, can you give me no comfort but this. Is this the sum of all your study, as well as mine? Ah, it is vain, useless; man can find out nothing. We are all blind; groping our way through mysterious paths, and now I am going into the last—the great mystery!"

She shook her head, with a bitter smile, and closed her eyes, as if to shut out some hideous specter. Dr. Hartwell gave her a spoonful of some powerful medicine, and stood watching her face, distorted by the difficulty of breathing. A long silence ensued, broken only by the sobs of the parents. Cornelia leaned back, with closed eyes, and now and then her lips moved, but nothing intelligible escaped them. It was surprising how she seemed to rally, sometimes, and breathe

with perfect ease; then the paroxysms would come on more violently than ever. Beulah knelt on the floor, with her forehead resting on the arm of the chair, and her hands still grasped in the firm hold of the dying girl. Cornelia moved an instant, and murmured, audibly:

“‘For here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come.’ Ah! what is its name? that ‘continuing city!’ Necropolis?” Again she remained, for some time, speechless.

Dr. Hartwell softly wiped away the glistening drops on her brow, and opening her eyes, she looked up at him intently. It was an imploring gaze, which mutely said: “Can’t you help me?” He leaned over, and answered it, sadly enough:

“Courage, Cornelia! It will soon be over now. The worst is past, my friend.”

“Yes, I know. There is a chill creeping over me. Where is Eugene?”

He came and stood near her; his face full of anguish, which could not vent itself in tears. Her features became convulsed as she looked at him; a wailing cry broke from her lips; and extending her arms toward him, she said, sobbingly:

“Shall I see you no more—no more? Oh, Eugene, my brother, my pride, my dearest hope! whom I have loved better than my own life, are we now parted forever—forever!”

He laid her head on his bosom, and endeavored to soothe her; but clinging to him, she said, huskily:

“Eugene, with my last breath I implore you; forsake your intemperate companions. Shun them and their haunts. Let me die feeling that at least my dying prayer will save you! Oh, when I am gone; when I am silent in the graveyard, remember how the thought of your intemperance tortured me! Remember how I remonstrated, and entreated you not to ruin yourself! Remember that I loved you above anything on earth; and that, in my last hour, I prayed you to save yourself! Oh, Eugene, for my sake! for my sake! quit the wine cup, and leave drunkenness for others more degraded!—Promise me!—Where are you?—Oh, it is all cold and dark!—I can’t see you!—Eugene, promise, promise!—Eugene!—”

Her eyes were riveted on his, and her lips moved for some seconds; then the clasping hands gradually relaxed; the gasps ceased. Eugene felt a long shudder creep over the limbs, a deep, heavy sigh passed her lips, and Cornelia Graham’s soul was with its God.

Ah! after twenty-three years of hope and fear, struggling and questioning, what an exit! Eugene lifted the attenuated form, and placed it on the bed; then threw himself into her vacant chair, and sobbed like a broken-hearted child. Mr. Graham took his wife from the room; and after some moments,

Dr. Hartwell touched the kneeling figure, with the face still pressed against the chair Eugene now occupied.

"Come, Beulah, she will want you no more."

She lifted a countenance so full of woe, that as he looked at her, the moisture gathered in his eyes, and he put his hand tenderly on her head, saying:

"Come with me, Beulah."

"And this is death? Oh, my God, save me from such a death!"

She clasped her hands over her eyes, and shivered; then rising from her kneeling posture, threw herself on a couch, and buried her face in its cushions. That long night of self-communion was never forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TIME, "like a star, unhasting, yet unresting," moved on. The keen blasts of winter were gathered in their northern storehouses, and the mild airs of spring floated dreamily beneath genial skies. The day had been cloudless and balmy, but now the long, level rays of sunshine, darting from the horizon, told it "was well-nigh done"; and Beulah sat on the steps of her cottage home, and watched the dolphin-like death. The face wore a weary, suffering look; the large, restless eyes were sadder than ever, and there were tokens of languor in every feature. A few months had strangely changed the countenance, once so hopeful and courageous in its uplifted expression. Mrs. Williams had been confined to her room for many days by an attack of rheumatism, and the time devoted to her was generally reclaimed from sleep. It was no mystery that she looked ill and spent. Now, as she sat watching the silver crescent glittering in the west, her thoughts wandered to Clara Sanders, and the last letter received from her, telling of a glorious day star of hope which had risen in her cloudy sky. Mr. Arlington's brother had taught her that the dream of her girlhood was but a fleeting fancy, that she could love again more truly than before, and in the summer holidays she was to give him her hand and receive his name. Beulah rejoiced in her friend's happiness, but a dim foreboding arose, lest, as in Pauline's case, thorns should spring up in paths where now only blossoms were visible. Since that letter, so full of complaint and sorrow, no tidings had come from Pauline. Many months had elapsed, and Beulah wondered more and more at the prolonged silence. She had written several times, but received no answer, and imagination painted a wretched young wife in that distant parsonage. Early in spring, she learned from Dr. Asbury that Mr. Lockhart had

died at his plantation, of consumption, and she conjectured that Mrs. Lockhart must be with her daughter. Beulah half arose, then leaned back against the column, sighed involuntarily, and listened to that "still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills." Mrs. Williams was asleep, but the tea-table waited for her, and in her own room, on her desk, lay an unfinished manuscript which was due the editor the next morning. She was rigidly punctual in handing in her contributions, cost her what it might; yet now she shrank from the task of copying and punctuating, and sat a while longer, with the gentle southern breeze rippling over her hot brow. She no longer wrote incognito; by accident she was discovered as the authoress of several articles commented upon by other journals, and more than once her humble home had been visited by some of the leading *litterati* of the place. Her successful career, thus far, inflamed the ambition which formed so powerful an element in her mental organization, and a longing desire for fame took possession of her soul. Early and late she toiled; one article was scarcely in the hands of the compositor ere she was engaged upon another. She lived, as it were, in a perpetual brain fever, and her physical frame suffered proportionately. The little gate opened and closed with a creaking sound, and hearing a step near her, Beulah looked up and saw her guardian before her. The light from the dining-room fell on his face, and a glance showed her that, although it was pale and inflexible as ever, something of more than ordinary interest had induced this visit. He had never entered that gate before; and she sprang up, and held out both hands with an eager cry:

"Oh, sir, I am so glad to see you once more!"

He took her hands in his, and looked at her gravely; then made her sit down again on the step, and said:

"I suppose you would have died before you could get your consent to send for me? It is well that you have somebody to look after you. How long have you had this fever?"

"Fever! Why, sir, I have no fever," she replied, with some surprise.

"Oh, child! are you trying to destroy yourself by your obstinacy? If so, like most other things you undertake, you will succeed."

He held her hands, and kept his fingers on the quick-bounding pulse. Beulah had not seen him since the night of Cornelia's death, some months before, and conjectured that Dr. Asbury had told him she was not looking well.

She could not bear the steady, searching gaze of his luminous eyes, and moving restlessly, said:

"Sir, what induces you to suppose that I am sick? I have complained of indisposition to no one."

"Of course you have not, for people are to believe that you are a gutta-percha automaton."

She fancied his tone was slightly sneering; but his countenance wore the expression of anxious, protecting interest, which she had so prized in days past, and as her hands trembled in his clasp, and his firm hold tightened, she felt that it was useless to attempt to conceal the truth longer.

"I didn't know I was feverish, but for some time I have daily grown weaker; I tremble when I stand or walk, and I am not able to sleep. That is all."

He smiled at her earnest face, and asked:

"Is that all, child? Is that all?"

"Yes, sir, all."

"And here you have been, with a continued, wasting nervous fever, for you know not how many days, yet keep on your round of labors, without cessation?"

He dropped her hands, and folded his arms across his broad chest, keeping his eyes upon her.

"I am not at all ill; but I believe I need some medicine to strengthen me."

"Yes, child; you do, indeed, need a medicine, but it is one you will never take."

"Try me, sir," answered she, smiling.

"Try you? I might as well try to win an eagle from its lonely, rocky home. Beulah, you need rest. Rest for mind, body and heart. But you will not take it; oh, no, of course you won't!"

He passed his hand over his brow, and swept back the glossy chestnut hair, as if it oppressed him.

"I would willingly take it, sir, if I could; but the summer vacation is still distant, and, besides, my engagements oblige me to exert myself. It is a necessity with me."

"Rather say, sheer obstinacy," said he, sternly.

"You are severe, sir," replied Beulah, lifting her head haughtily.

"No, I only call things by their proper names."

"Very well; if you prefer it, then, obstinacy compels me just now to deny myself the rest you prescribe."

"Yes, rightly spoken; and it will soon compel you to a long rest, in the quiet place where Cornelia waits for you. You are a mere shadow now, and a few more months will complete your design. I have blamed myself more than once that I did not suffer you to die with Lilly, as you certainly would have done, had I not tended you so closely. Your death, then, would have saved me much care and sorrow, and you many struggles."

There was a shadow on his face, and his voice had the deep, musical tone which always made her heart thrill. Her eyelids drooped, as she said, sadly:

"You are unjust. We meet rarely enough, Heaven knows. Why do you invariably make these occasions seasons of upbraiding; of taunts, and sneers? Sir, I owe you my life, and more than my life, and never can I forget or cancel my obligations; but are you no longer my friend?"

His whole face lighted up; the firm mouth trembled:

"No, Beulah. I am no longer your friend."

She looked up at him, and a quiver crept across her lips. She had never seen that eager expression in his stern face before. His dark, fascinating eyes were full of pleading tenderness, and as she drooped her head on her lap, she knew that Clara was right, that she was dearer to her guardian than anyone else. A half-smothered groan escaped her, and there was a short pause.

Dr. Hartwell put his hands gently on her bowed head, and lifted the face.

"Child, does it surprise you?"

She said nothing, and leaning her head against him, as she had often done years before, he passed his hand caressingly over the folds of her hair, and added:

"You call me your guardian; make me such. I can no longer be only your friend; I must either be more, or henceforth a stranger. My life has been full of sorrow and bitterness, but you can bring sunlight to my home and heart. You were too proud to be adopted. Once I asked you to be my child. Ah! I did not know my own heart then. Our separation during the yellow fever season first taught me how inexpressibly dear you were to me, how entirely you filled my heart. Now, I ask you to be my wife: to give yourself to me. Oh, Beulah, come back to my cheerless home! Rest your lonely heart, my proud darling."

"Impossible. Do not ask it! I cannot! I cannot!" cried Beulah, shuddering violently.

"Why not, my little Beulah?"

He clasped his arm around her and drew her close to him, while his head was bent so low that his brown hair touched her cheek.

"Oh, sir, I would rather die! I should be miserable as your wife. You do not love me, sir; you are lonely, and miss my presence in your house; but that is not love, and marriage would be a mockery. You would despise a wife who was such only from gratitude. Do not ask this of me; we would both be wretched. You pity my loneliness and poverty, and I reverence you; nay, more, I love you, sir, as my best friend; I love you as my protector. You are all I have on earth to look to for sympathy and guidance. You are all I have, but I cannot marry you; oh, no, no! a thousand times, no!" She shrank away from the touch of his lips on her

brow, and an expression of hopeless suffering settled upon her face.

He withdrew his arm, and rose.

"Beulah, I have seen sunlit bubbles gliding swiftly on the bosom of a clear brook, and casting golden shadows down upon the pebbly bed. Such a shadow you are now chasing; ah, child, the shadow of a gilded bubble! Panting and eager, you clutch at it; the bubble dances on, the shadow with it; and Beulah, you will never, never grasp it. Ambition such as yours, which aims at literary fame, is the deadliest foe to happiness. Poor child, it needs no prophetic vision to predict your ill-starred career! Already the consuming fever has begun its march. In far distant lands, I shall have no tidings of you, but none will be needed. Perhaps, when I travel home to die, your feverish dream will have ended; or perchance, sinking to eternal rest in some palm grove of the far East, we shall meet no more. Since the day I took you in my arms from Lilly's coffin, you have been my only hope, my all. You little knew how precious you were to me, nor what keen suffering our estrangement cost me. Oh, child, I have loved you as only a strong, suffering, passionate heart could love its last idol! But I, too, chased a shadow. Experience should have taught me wisdom. Now I am a gloomy, joyless man, weary of my home, and henceforth a wanderer. Asbury (if he lives) will be truly your friend, and to him I shall commit the legacy which, hitherto, you have refused to accept. Mr. Graham paid it into my hands, after his last unsatisfactory interview with you. The day may come when you will need it. I shall send you some medicine, which, for your own sake, you had better take immediately; but you will never grow stronger until you give yourself rest, relaxation, physically and mentally. Remember, when your health is broken, and all your hopes are withered, remember I warned you, and would have saved you, and you would not." He stooped, and took his hat from the floor.

Beulah sat looking at him, stunned, bewildered, her tearless eyes strained and frightened in their expression. The transient illumination in his face had faded, like sunset tints, leaving dull, leaden clouds behind. His compressed lips were firm again, and the misty eyes became coldly glittering, as one sees stars brighten in a frosty air.

He put on his hat, and they looked at each other fixedly.

"You are not in earnest? you are not going to quit your home?" cried Beulah, in a broken, unsteady tone.

"Yes, going into the far East; to the ruined altars of Baalbec; to Meroc, to Tartary, India, China, and only fate knows where else. Perhaps find a cool Nebo in some Himalayan range. Going? Yes. Did you suppose I meant only to operate on your sympathies? I know you too well. What is it to

you whether I live or die? whether my weary feet rest in an Indian jungle, or a sunny slope of the city cemetery? Yes, I am going very soon, and this is our last meeting. I shall not again disturb you in your ambitious pursuits. Ah, child——”

“Oh, don’t go! don’t leave me! I beg, I implore you, not to leave me. Oh, I am so desolate! don’t forsake me! I could not bear to know you were gone. Oh, don’t leave me!” She sprang up, and throwing her arms around his neck, clung to him, trembling like a frightened child. But there was no relaxation of his pale, fixed features, as he coldly answered:

“Once resolved, I never waver. So surely as I live, I shall go. It might have been otherwise, but you decided it yourself. An hour ago, you held my destiny in your hands; now it is fixed. I should have gone six years since, had I not indulged a lingering hope of happiness in your love. Child, don’t shiver, and cling to me so. Oceans will soon roll between us, and, for a time, you will have no leisure to regret my absence. Henceforth we are strangers.”

“No, that shall never be. You do not mean it; you know it is impossible. You know that I prize your friendship above every earthly thing. You know that I look up to you as to no one else. That I shall be miserable, oh, how miserable, if you leave me! Oh, sir, I have mourned over your coldness and indifference; don’t cast me off! Don’t go to distant lands, and leave me to struggle without aid or counsel in this selfish, unfriendly world! My heart dies within me at the thought of your being where I shall not be able to see you. Oh, my guardian, don’t forsake me!”

She pressed her face against his shoulder, and clasped her arms firmly round his neck.

“I am not your guardian, Beulah. You refused to make me such. You are a proud, ambitious woman, solicitous only to secure eminence as an authoress. I asked your heart; you have now none to give; but perhaps some day you will love me, as devotedly, nay, as madly, as I have long loved you; for love like mine would wake affection even in a marble image; but then, rolling oceans and trackless deserts will divide us. And now, good-by. Make yourself a name; bind your aching brow with the chaplet of Fame, and see if ambition can fill your heart. Good-by, dear child.”

Gently he drew her arms from his neck, and took her face in his soft palms. He looked at her a moment, sadly and earnestly, as if striving to fix her features in the frame of memory; then bent his head and pressed a long kiss on her lips. She put out her hands, but he had gone, and sinking down on the step, she hid her face in her arms. A pall seemed suddenly thrown over the future, and the orphaned heart

shrank back from the lonely path where only specters were visible. Never before had she realized how dear he was to her, how large a share of her love he possessed, and now the prospect of a long, perhaps final separation, filled her with a shivering, horrible dread. We have seen that self-reliance was a powerful element of her character, and she had learned, from painful necessity, to depend as little as possible upon the sympathies of others; but in this hour of anguish a sense of joyless isolation conquered; her proud soul bowed down beneath the weight of intolerable grief, and acknowledged itself not wholly independent of the love and presence of her guardian.

Beulah went back to her desk, and with tearless eyes began the allotted task of writing. The article was due, and must be finished; was there not a long, dark future in which to mourn? The sketch was designed to prove that woman's happiness was not necessarily dependent upon marriage. That a single life might be more useful, more tranquil, more unselfish. Beulah had painted her heroine in glowing tints, and triumphantly proved her theory correct, while to female influence she awarded a sphere (exclusive of rostrums and all political arenas) wide as the universe, and high as heaven. Weary work it all seemed to her now; but she wrote on, and on, and finally the last page was copied and the last punctuation mark affixed. She wrapped up the manuscript, directed it to the editor, and then the pen fell from her nerveless fingers, and her head went down, with wailing cry, on her desk. There the morning sun flashed upon a white face, tear-stained and full of keen anguish. How her readers would have marveled at the sight! Ah, "Verily the heart knoweth its own bitterness."

CHAPTER XXV.

ONE afternoon in the following week, Mrs. Williams sat wrapped up in the hall, watching Beulah's movements in the yard at the rear of the house. The whitewashed paling was covered with luxuriant raspberry vines, and in one corner of the garden was a bed of strawberry plants. Over this bed Beulah was bending with a basket, nearly filled with the ripe scarlet berries. Stooping close to the plants, she saw only the fruit she was engaged in picking, and when the basket was quite full, she was suddenly startled by a merry laugh, and a pair of hands clasped over her eyes.

"Who blindfolds me?" said she.

"Guess, you solemn witch."

"Why, Georgia, of course."

The hands were removed, and Georgia Asbury's merry face greeted her.

"I am glad to see you, Georgia. Where is Helen?"

"Oh, gone to ride with one of her adorers, but I have brought somebody to see you who is worth the whole Asbury family. No less a personage than my famous cousin Reginald Lindsay, whom you have heard us speak of so often. Oh, how tempting the luscious berries are! Reginald and I intend to stay to tea, and father will perhaps come out in the carriage for us. Come, yonder is my cousin on the gallery looking at you, and pretending to talk to Mrs. Williams. He has read your magazine sketches and is very anxious to see you. How nicely you look; only a little too statuish! Can't you get up a smile? That is better. Here, let me twine this cluster of wistaria in your hair; I stole it as I ran up the steps."

Beulah was clad in a pure white mull muslin, and wore a short black silk apron, confined at the waist by a heavy cord and tassel. Georgia fastened the purple blossoms in her silky hair, and they entered the house. Mr. Lindsay met them, and as his cousin introduced him, Beulah looked at him, and met the earnest gaze of a pair of deep, blue eyes, which seemed to index a nature singularly tranquil. She greeted him quietly, and would have led the way to the front of the house, but Georgia threw herself down on the steps, and exclaimed, eagerly:

"Do let us stay here; the air is so deliciously sweet and cool. Cousin, there is a chair. Beulah, you and I will stem these berries at once, so that they may be ready for tea."

She took the basket, and soon their fingers were stained with the rosy juice of the fragrant fruit. All restraint vanished; the conversation was gay, and spiced now and then with repartees which elicited Georgia's birdish laugh, and banished for a time the weary, joyless expression of Beulah's countenance. The berries were finally arranged to suit Georgia's taste, and the party returned to the little parlor. Here Beulah was soon engaged by Mr. Lindsay in the discussion of some of the leading literary questions of the day. She forgot the great sorrow that brooded over her heart, a faint, pearly glow crept into her cheeks, and the mouth lost its expression of resolute endurance. She found Mr. Lindsay highly cultivated in his tastes, polished in his manners, and possessed of rare intellectual attainments, while the utter absence of egotism and pedantry impressed her with involuntary admiration.

Soon after, Beulah took her place at the tea-table, and conversation turned on the delights of country life.

"Are you residing near Mr. Arlington?" said Beulah.

"Quite near; his plantation adjoins mine. Is he a friend of yours?"

"No, but I have a friend living this year in his family. Miss Sanders is governess for his children. You probably knew her."

"Yes, I see her occasionally. Report says she is soon to become the bride of Richard Arlington."

A slight smile curved his lips as he watched Beulah's countenance. She offered no comment, and he perceived that the *on dit* was not new to her.

"Beulah, I suppose you have heard of Dr. Hartwell's intended journey to the East? What an oddity he is! Told me he contemplated renting a bungalow somewhere in heathendom, and turning either Brahmin or Parsee, he had not quite decided which. He has sold his beautiful place to the Farleys. The greenhouse plants he gave to mother, and all the statuary and paintings are to be sent to us until his return, which cannot be predicted with any certainty. Father frets a good deal over this freak, as he calls it, and says the doctor had much better stay at home and physic the sick. I thought it was a sudden whim, but he says he has contemplated the trip for a long time. He is going immediately, I believe. It must be a trial to you," said the thoughtless girl.

"Yes, I cannot realize it yet," replied Beulah, struggling with herself for composure, and hastily setting down her teacup, which trembled violently. The shadows swept over her once more. Mr. Lindsay noticed her agitation, and with delicate consideration forbore to look at her. Georgia continued, heedlessly:

"I wanted that melodeon that sits in his study, but though the remainder of the furniture is to be auctioned off, he says he will not sell the melodeon, and requested my father to have it carefully locked up somewhere at home. I asked if I might not use it, and what do you suppose he said? That I might have his grand piano, if I would accept it, but that nobody was to touch his melodeon. I told him he ought to send the piano out to you, in his absence, but he looked cross, and said you would not use it if he did."

Poor Beulah! her lips quivered, and her fingers clasped each other tightly, but she said nothing. Just then she heard Dr. Asbury's quick step in the hall, and to her infinite delight, he entered, accompanied by Helen. She saw that though his manner was kind and bantering as usual, there was an anxious look on his benevolent face, and his heavy brows occasionally knitted. When he went into the adjoining room to see Mrs. Williams, she understood his glance, and followed him. He paused in the hall, and said, eagerly: "Has Hartwell been here lately?"

"Yes, he was here last week."

"Did he tell you of his whim about traveling East?"

"Yes, he told me."

"Beulah, take care what you are about! You are working mischief not easily rectified. Child, keep Guy at home!"

"He is master of his own movements, and you know his stubborn will. I would keep him here if I could, but I have no influence."

"All fiddlesticks! I know better! I am neither a bat nor a mole. Beulah, I warn you; I beg you, child, mind how you act. Once entirely estranged, all the steam in Christendom could not force him back. Don't let him go; if you do, the game is up, I tell you now. You will repent your own work, if you do not take care. I told him he was a fool, to leave such a position as his, and go to dodging robbers in Eastern deserts; whereupon he looked as bland and impenetrable as if I had compared him to Solomon. There, go back to your company, and mind what I say; don't let Guy go."

He left her; and though she exerted herself to entertain her guests, Mr. Lindsay saw that her mind was troubled, and her heart oppressed. He endeavored to divert her thoughts by introducing various topics; and she talked and smiled, and even played and sang, yet the unlifting cloud lay on her brow. The evening seemed strangely long, and she accompanied her visitors to the door with a sensation of relief. At parting, Mr. Lindsay took her hand, and said, in a low voice:

"May I come whenever I am in your city?"

"Certainly; I shall be pleased to see you, when you have leisure," she replied, hurriedly.

"I shall avail myself of your permission, I assure you."

She had often heard Dr. Asbury speak, with fond pride, of this nephew; and as Eugene had also frequently mentioned him in his early letters from Heidelberg, she felt that he was scarcely a stranger in the ordinary acceptance of the term. To her, his parting words seemed merely polite, commonplace forms; and with no thought of a future acquaintance, she dismissed him from her mind, which was too painfully preoccupied to dwell upon the circumstances of his visit.

A few days passed, and one Saturday morning she sat in the dining-room, finishing a large drawing, upon which she had for months expended all her leisure moments. It was designed from a description in "Queen Mab," and she took up her crayon to give the final touch, when heavy steps in the hall arrested her attention, and glancing toward the door, she saw Hal, Dr. Hartwell's driver, with a wooden box on his shoulder, and Charon by his side. The latter barked with delight, and sprang to meet the girl, who had hastily risen.

"How do you do, Miss Beulah? It is many a day since I have seen you, and you look the worse of wear, too. Haven't been sick, have you?" said Hal, sliding the box down on the floor.

"Not exactly sick, but not so well as usual," she answered, passing her trembling hands over the dog's head.

"Well, I don't see, for my part, what is to become of us all, now master's gone——"

"Gone!" echoed Beulah.

"Why, to be sure. He started to the plantation yesterday, to set things all in order there, and he is going straight on to New York. The house looks desolate enough, and I feel like I was about to dig my own grave. Just before he left, he called me into his study, and told me that as soon as he had gone, I was to bring Charon over to you, and ask you to keep him, and take care of him. He tried to unlock the collar on his neck, but somehow the key would not turn. Master looked dreadful sad when he patted poor Char's head, and let the brute put his paws on his shoulders for the last time. Just as the boat pushed off, he called to me to be sure to bring him to you; so here he is; and, Miss Beulah, the poor fellow seems to know something is wrong; he whined all night, and ran over the empty house this morning, growling and sniffing. You are to keep him till master comes home; the Lord only knows when that will be. I tried to find out, but he looked for the world like one of them stone faces in the study, and gave me no satisfaction. Miss Beulah, Dr. Asbury was at the house just as I started, and he sent over this box to you. Told me to tell you that he had all the pictures moved to his house, but had not room to hang all, so he sent one over for you to take care of. Shall I take it out of the case?"

"Never mind, Hal, I can do that. Did your master leave no other message for me? was there no note?" She leaned heavily on a chair to support herself.

"None that I know of, except that you must be kind to Charon. I have no time to spare; Dr. Asbury needs me; so good-by, Miss Beulah. I will stop some day when I am passing, and see how the dog comes on. I know he will be satisfied with you."

The faithful servant touched his hat and withdrew. The storm of grief could no longer be repressed, and sinking down on the floor, Beulah clasped her arms round Charon's neck, and hid her face in his soft, curling hair, while her whole frame shook with convulsive sobs. She had not believed her guardian would leave her without coming again, and had confidently expected him, and now he had gone. Perhaps forever; at best for many years. She might never see him again, and this thought was more than she could endure. The proud restraint she was wont to impose upon her feelings all vanished, and in her despairing sorrow she wept and moaned, as she had never done before, even when Lilly was taken from her. Charon crouched close to her, with a mute grief clearly written in his sober, sagacious countenance, and each clung to the other, as to a last stay and solace. He was a powerful animal, with

huge limbs and a thick, shaggy covering, sable as midnight, without a speck of white about him. Around his neck was a silver chain, supporting a broad piece of plate, on which was engraved, in German letters, the single word "Hartwell." How long she sat there Beulah knew not, but a growl roused her, and she saw Mrs. Williams looking sorrowfully at her.

"My child, what makes you moan and weep so bitterly?"

"Oh, because I am so miserable; because I have lost my best friend; my only friend; my guardian. He has gone—gone! and I did not see him." With a stifled cry her face went down again.

The matron had never seen her so unnerved before, and wondered at the vehemence of her grief, but knew her nature too well to attempt consolation. Beulah lifted the box and retired to her own room, followed by Charon. Securing the door, she put the case on the table and looked at it wistfully. Were her conjectures, her hopes correct? She raised the lid, and unwrapped the frame, and there was the noble head of her guardian. She hung the portrait on a hook just above her desk, and then stood, with streaming eyes, looking up at it. It had been painted a few weeks after his marriage, and represented him in the full morning of manhood, ere his heart was embittered and his clear brow overshadowed. The artist had suffered a ray of sunshine to fall on the brown hair that rippled round his white temples with careless grace. There was no mustache to shade the sculptured lips, and they seemed about to part in one of those rare, fascinating smiles which Beulah had often watched for in vain. The matchless eyes looked down at her, with brooding tenderness in their hazel depths, and now seemed to question her uncontrollable grief. Yet she had pained him; had in part caused his exile from the home of his youth, and added another sorrow to those which now veiled that peerless face in gloom. He had placed his happiness in her hands; had asked her to be his wife. She looked at the portrait, and shuddered and moaned. She loved him above all others! she loved him as a child adores its father; but how could she, who had so revered him, consent to become his wife? Besides, she could not believe he loved her. He liked her; pitied her isolation and orphanage; felt the need of her society, and wanted her always in his home. But she could not realize that he, who so worshiped beauty, could possibly love her. It was all like a hideous dream which morning would dispel; but there was the reality, and there was Charon looking steadily up at the portrait he was at no loss to recognize.

"Oh, if I could have seen him once more! If he had parted from me in kindness, it would not have been so intolerable. But to remember his stern, sad face, as I last saw it; oh, how can I bear it! To have it haunting me through life, like a

horrible specter; no friendly words to cherish; no final message; all gloom and anger. Oh, how shall I bear it!" and she fell on Charon's neck and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN the early days of summer, Mr. and Mrs. Graham left the city for one of the fashionable watering places on the Gulf, accompanied by Antoinette. Eugene remained, on some pretext of business, but promised to follow in a short time. The week subsequent to their departure saw a party of gentlemen assembled to dine at his house. The long afternoon wore away, still they sat round the table. The cloth had been removed, and only wine and cigars remained; bottle after bottle was emptied, and finally decanters were in requisition. The servants shrugged their shoulders, and looked on with amused expectancy. The conversation grew loud and boisterous, now and then flavored with oaths; twilight came on—the shutters were closed—the magnificent chandelier lighted. Eugene seized a crystal ice bowl, and was about to extract a lump of ice when it fell from his fingers and shivered to atoms. A roar of laughter succeeded the exploit, and uncorking a fresh bottle of champagne, he demanded a song. Already a few of the guests were leaning on the table stupefied, but several began the strain. It was a genuine Bacchanalian ode, and the deafening shout rose to the frescoed ceiling as the revelers leaned forward and touched their glasses. Touched, did I say; it were better written clashed. There was a ringing chorus as crystal met crystal; glittering fragments flew in every direction; down ran the foaming wine, thick with splintered glass, on the rose-wood table. But the strain was kept up; fresh glasses were supplied; fresh bottles drained; the waiters looked on, wondered where all this would end, and pointed to the ruin of the costly service. The brilliant gaslight shone on a scene of recklessness pitiable indeed. All were young men, and, except Eugene, all unmarried; but they seemed familiar with such occasions. One or two, thoroughly intoxicated, lay their heads on the table, unconscious of what passed; others struggled to sit upright, yet the shout was still raised from time to time.

"Fill up, and let us have that glorious song from 'Lucrezia Borgia.' Hey, Proctor!" cried Eugene.

"That is poor fun without Vincent. He sings it equal to Vestvali. Fill up there, and shake up Cowdon. Come, begin, and——"

He raised his glass with a disgusting oath, and was about to commence, when Munroe said, stammeringly:

"Where is Fred, anyhow? He is a devilish fine fellow for a frolic. I——"

"Why gone to the coast with Graham's pretty wife. He is all devotion. They waltz and ride, and in fine, he is her admirer *par excellence*. Stop your stupid stammering, and begin."

Eugene half arose at this insulting mention of his wife's name, but the song was now ringing around him, and sinking back, he, too, raised his unsteady voice. Again and again the words were madly shouted; and then, dashing his empty glass against the marble mantel, Proctor swore he would not drink another drop. What a picture of degradation! Disordered hair, soiled clothes, flushed, burning cheeks, glaring eyes, and nerveless hands. Eugene attempted to rise, but fell back in his chair, tearing off his cravat, which seemed to suffocate him. Proctor, who was too thoroughly inured to such excesses to feel it as sensibly as the remainder of the party, laughed brutally, and kicking over a chair which stood in his way, grasped his host by the arm, and exclaimed:

"Come out of this confounded room; it is as hot as a furnace; and let us have a ride to cool us. Come, Munroe and Cowdon must look after the others. By Jove, Graham, old father Bacchus himself could not find fault with your cellar. Come."

Each took a cigar from the stand, and descended to the front door, where a light buggy was waiting the conclusion of the revel. It was a cloudless July night, and the full moon poured a flood of silver over the silent earth. Proctor assisted Eugene into the buggy, and gathering up the reins, seized the whip, gave a flourish and shout, and off sprang the spirited horse, which the groom could, with difficulty, hold until the riders were seated.

"Now, Graham, I will bet a couple of baskets of Heidsick that my royal Telegraph will make the first mile post in 2.30. What say you?"

"Done; 2.40 is the lowest."

"Phew! Telegraph, my jewel, show what manner of flesh you are made of. Now, then, out with your watch."

He shook the reins, and the horse rushed forward like an arrow. Before the mile post was reached it became evident that Telegraph had taken the game entirely out of his master's hands. In vain the reins were tightened. Proctor leaned so far back that his hat fell off. Still the frantic horse sped on. The mile post flashed by, but Eugene could scarcely sit erect, much less note the time. At this stage of the proceedings, the whirl of wheels behind gave a new impetus to Telegraph's flying feet. They were near a point in the road where an alley led off at right angles, and thinking, doubtless, that it was time to

retrace his steps, the horse dashed down the alley, heedless of Proctor's efforts to restrain him, and turning into a neighboring street, rushed back toward the city. Bareheaded, and with heavy drops of perspiration streaming from his face, Proctor cursed, and jerked, and drew the useless reins. On went Telegraph, making good his title, now swerving to this side of the road, and now to that; but as he approached a mass of bricks which were piled on one side of the street, near the foundations of a new building, the moonlight flashed upon a piece of tin, in the sand on the opposite side, and frightened by the glitter, he plunged toward the bricks. The wheels struck, the buggy tilted, then came down again with a terrible jolt, and Eugene was thrown out on the pile. Proctor was jerked over the dashboard, dragged some distance, and finally left in the sand, while Telegraph ran on to the stable.

It was eleven o'clock, but Beulah was writing in her own room; and through the open window heard the thundering tramp, the rattle among the bricks, Proctor's furious curses, and surmised that some accident had happened. She sprang to the window, saw the buggy, just as it was wheeled on, and hoped nothing was hurt. But Charon, who slept on the portico, leaped over the paling, ran around the bricks, and barked alarmingly. She unlocked the door, saw that no one was passing, and opening the little gate, looked out. Charon stood watching a prostrate form, and she fearlessly crossed the street and bent over the body. One arm was crushed beneath him; the other thrown up over the face. She recognized the watch chain, which was of a curious pattern; and, for an instant, all objects swam before her. She felt faint; her heart seemed to grow icy and numb; but with a great effort, she moved the arm, and looked on the face, gleaming in the moonlight. Trembling like a weed in a wintry blast, she knelt beside him. He was insensible, but not dead; though it was evident there must have been some severe contusions about the head. She saw that no time should be lost, and running into one of the neighboring houses, knocked violently. The noise of the horse and buggy had already aroused the inmates, and very soon the motionless form was borne into Beulah's little cottage, and placed on a couch, while a messenger was dispatched for Dr. Asbury. Eugene remained just as they placed him; and kneeling beside him, Beulah held his cold hands in hers, and watched, in almost breathless anxiety, for some return of animation. She knew that he was intoxicated; that this, and this only, caused the accident; and tears of shame and commiseration trickled down her cheeks. Since their parting interview, previous to his marriage, they had met but once, and then in silence, beside Cornelia in her dying hour. It was little more than a year since she had risked his displeasure, and remon-

strated with him on his ruinous course; and that comparatively short period had wrought painful changes in his once noble, handsome face. She had hoped that Cornelia's dying prayer would save him; but now, alas, it was too apparent that the appeal had been futile. She knew that his wife was absent, and determined to send for her as soon as possible. The long hour of waiting seemed an eternity, but, at last, Dr. Asbury came, and carefully examined the bruised limbs. Beulah grasped his arm.

"Oh! will he die?"

"I don't know, child; this arm is badly fractured, and I am afraid there is a severe injury on the back of the head. It won't do to move him home, so send Hal in from my buggy, to help me put him in bed. Have me some bandages at once, Beulah."

As they carried him into Mrs. Williams's room, and prepared to set the fractured arm, he groaned, and for a moment struggled, then relapsed into a heavy stupor. Dr. Asbury carefully straightened and bandaged the limb, and washed the blood from his temples, where a gash had been inflicted in the fall.

"Will you go to his wife at once, sir, and inform her of his condition?" said Beulah, who stood by the blood-stained pillow, pale and anxious.

"Don't you know his wife is not here? She has gone for the summer. Wife, did I say? she does not deserve the sacred name! If he had had a wife, he would never have come to this ruin and disgrace. It is nothing more than I expected when he married her. I could easily put her soul on the end of a lancet, and as for heart—she has none at all! She is a pretty flirt, fonder of admiration than of her husband. I will write by the earliest mail, informing Mrs. Graham of the accident and its possible consequences, and perhaps respect for the opinion of the world may bring her home to him. Beulah, it is a difficult matter to believe that that drunken, stupid victim there is Eugene Graham, who promised to become an honor to his friends and his name. Satan must have established the first distillery; the institution smacks of the infernal! Child, keep ice upon that head, will you, and see that as soon as possible he takes a spoonful of the medicine I mixed just now. I am afraid it will be many days before he leaves this house. If he lives, the only consolation is, that it may be a lesson and warning to him. I will be back in an hour or so. As for Proctor, whom I met limping home, it would have been a blessing to the other young men of the city, and to society generally, if he had never crawled out of the sand where he was thrown."

A little while after, the silence was broken by a heavy sob, and glancing up, Beulah perceived the matron standing near the bed, gazing at the sleeper.

"Oh, that he should come to this! I would ten thousand times rather he had died in his unstained boyhood."

"If he lives, this accident may be his salvation."

"God grant it may—God grant it may!"

Falling on her knees, the aged woman put up a prayer of passionate entreaty, that Almighty God would spare his life, and save him from a drunkard's fate.

"If I, too, could pray for him, it might ease my aching heart," thought Beulah, as she listened to the imploring words of the matron.

And why not? Ah! the murky vapors of unbelief shrouded the All-Father from her wandering soul. Dawn looked in upon two sorrowing watchers beside that stupid slumberer, and showed that the physician's fears were realized; a raging fever had set in, and this night was but the commencement of long, dreary vigils. About noon, Beulah was crossing the hall, with a bowl of ice in her hand, when some one at the door pronounced her name, and Proctor approached her, accompanied by Cowdon. She had once met the former at Mr. Graham's, and having heard Cornelia regret the miserable influence he exerted over her brother, was prepared to treat him coldly.

"We have come to see Graham, madam," said he, shrinking from her sad, searching eyes, yet assuming an air of haughty indifference.

"You cannot see him, sir."

"But, I tell you, I must! I shall remove him to his own house, where he can be properly attended to. Where is he?"

"The physician particularly urged the necessity of keeping everything quiet. He shall not be disturbed; but as he is unconscious, perhaps it will afford you some gratification to behold the ruin you have wrought. Gentlemen, here is your victim."

She opened the door and suffered them to stand on the threshold and look at the prostrate form, with the head enveloped in icy cloths, and the face bloated and purplish from bruises and fever. Neither Proctor nor his companion could endure the smile of withering contempt which curled her lips, as she pointed to the victim of their temptations and influence, and with a half-suppressed imprecation, Proctor turned on his heel and left the house. Apparently this brief visit quite satisfied them, for it was not repeated. Days and nights of unremitted watching ensued; Eugene was wildly delirious, now singing snatches of drinking songs and waving his hands, as if to his guests; and now bitterly upbraiding his wife for her heartlessness and folly. The confinement of his fractured arm frenzied him; often he struggled violently to free himself, fancying that he was incarcerated in some horrid dungeon. On the morning of the fourth day after the accident, a carriage stopped at the

cottage gate, and, springing out, Mr. Graham hurried into the house. As he entered the sickroom, and caught sight of the tossing sufferer, a groan escaped him, and he covered his eyes an instant, as if to shut out the vision. Eugene imagined he saw one of the Heidelberg professors, and, laughing immoderately, began a rapid conversation in German. Mr. Graham could not conceal his emotion, and, fearing its effect on the excitable patient, Beulah beckoned him aside, and warned him of the possible consequences. He grasped her hand and asked the particulars of the occurrence, which had been mentioned to him vaguely. She told him the account given by Eugene's servants of the night's revel, and then the *dénouement* in front of her door. In conclusion, she said, earnestly:

"Where is his wife? Why is she not here?"

"She seemed to think she could render no assistance; and fearing that all would be over before we could get here, preferred my coming at once, and writing to her of his condition. Ah! she is miserably fitted for such scenes as you must have witnessed." And the gray-haired man sighed heavily.

"What! can she bear to commit her husband to other hands at such a crisis as this? How can she live away from his side, when every hour may be his last? Oh! it is, indeed, so utterly, utterly heartless, selfish, callous! Poor Eugene! better find release from such a union in death, than go through life bound to a wife so unblushingly indifferent!"

Her face was one flash of scorn and indignation, and extending her hand toward the restless invalid, she continued, in a lower tone:

"She has deserted her sacred post; but a truer, better friend, one who has always loved him as a brother, will supply her place. All that a sister's care can do, assuredly he shall have."

"You are very kind, Miss Beulah; my family are under lasting obligations to you for your generous attentions to that poor boy of ours, and I——"

"No. You understand little of the nature of our friendship. We were orphan children, warmly attached to each other, before you took him to a home of wealth and lavish indulgence. Were he my own brother, I could not feel more deeply interested in his welfare, and while he requires care and nursing, I consider it my privilege to watch over and guard him. There is Dr. Asbury in the hall; he can tell you better than I of his probable recovery."

Mr. Graham remained at the cottage, and having written to Antoinette of the imminent danger in which he found her husband, urged her to lose no time in joining him. Unluckily, he was ignorant of all the information which is so essential in the occupation of nursing. He was anxious to do everything in

his power; but, like the majority of persons on such occasions, failed wretchedly in his attempts. Almost as restless and nervous as the sick man, he only increased the difficulties he would fain have remedied, and Beulah finally prevailed upon him to abandon his efforts and leave the room, where his constant movements annoyed and irritated the sufferer. Eugene recognized no one, but his eyes followed Beulah continually; and when his delirium was at its height, only her voice and clasp of his hand could in any degree soothe him. In his ravings, she noticed two constantly conflicting emotions; a stern bitterness of feeling toward his wife, and an almost adoring fondness for his infant child. Of the latter he talked incessantly, and vowed that she, at least, should love him. As the weary days crept by, Beulah started at every sound, fancying that the wife had certainly come; but hour after hour found only Mrs. Williams and the orphan guarding the deserted husband. Gradually the fever abated, and a deathlike stupor succeeded. Mr. Graham stole about the house, like a haunting spirit, miserable and useless, and in the solemn stillness of midnight only Beulah sat by the pillow, where a head now rested motionless as that of a corpse. Mrs. Williams was asleep on a couch at the opposite end of the room, and in the dim, spectral light of the shaded lamp, the watcher and her charge looked unearthly. Faint from constant vigils, Beulah threw her arm on the bed and leaned her head upon it, keeping her eyes on the colorless face before her. Who that has watched over friends, hovering upon the borders of the spirit-land, needs to be told how dreary was the heart of the solitary nurse? And to those who have not thus suffered and endured, no description would adequately portray the desolation and gloom.

The stars were waning when Eugene moved, threw up his hand over the pillow, and, after a moment, opened his eyes. Beulah leaned forward, and he looked at her fixedly, as if puzzled; then said, feebly:

"Beulah, is it you?"

A cry of joy rolled to her lips, but she hushed it, and answered, tremblingly:

"Yes, Eugene, it is Beulah."

His eyes wandered about the room, and then rested again on her countenance, with a confused, perplexed expression.

"Am I at home? What is the matter?"

"Yes, Eugene, at home among your best friends. Don't talk any more; try to sleep again."

With a great joy in her heart she extinguished the light, so that he could see nothing. After a few moments he said, slowly:

"Beulah, did I dream I saw you? Beulah!" She felt his hand put out, as if to feel for her.

"No, I am sitting by you, but will not talk to you now. You must keep quiet."

There was a short silence.

"But where am I? Not at home, I know."

She did not reply, and he repeated the question more earnestly.

"You are in my house, Eugene; let that satisfy you."

His fingers closed over hers tightly, and soon he slept.

The sun was high in the sky when he again unclosed his eyes and found Dr. Asbury feeling his pulse. His mind was still bewildered, and he looked around him, wonderingly.

"How do you feel, Graham?" said the doctor.

"Feel! as if I had been standing on my head. What is the matter with me, doctor? Have I been sick?"

"Well—yes; you have not been exactly well, and feel stupid after a long nap. Take a spoonful of this nectar I have prepared for you. No wry faces, man! It will clear your head!"

Eugene attempted to raise himself, but fell back, exhausted, while, for the first time, he noticed his arm firmly incased in wood and bandages.

"What have you been doing to my arm? Why, I can't move it. I should——"

"Oh, don't trouble yourself, Graham; you injured it, and I bound it up, that is all. When gentlemen amuse themselves with such gymnastic feats as you performed, they must expect a little temporary inconvenience from crushed bones and overstrained muscles. Beulah, mind my directions about silence and quiet."

The doctor walked out to escape further questioning. Eugene looked at his useless, stiffened arm, and then at Beulah, saying, anxiously:

"What is the matter with me?"

"You were thrown out of a buggy and fractured your arm in the fall."

She thought it best to tell the truth at once.

Memory flew back to her deserted throne, and dimly the events of that evening's revel passed through his mind. A flush of shame rose to his temples, and turning his head toward the wall, he hid his face in the pillow. Then Beulah heard a deep, shuddering sigh, and a groan of remorseful agony. After a long silence, he said, in a tone of humiliation that drew tears to her eyes:

"How long have I been here?"

She told him the number of days, and he immediately asked:

"Have I been in any danger?"

"Yes, very great danger; but that has all passed now, and if you will only be composed and careful, you will soon be strong again."

"I heard my father talking to you; who else is here?"

He looked at her with eager interest.

"No one else, except our kind matron. Mr. Graham came as soon as the letter reached him, and has not left the house since."

A look of indescribable sorrow and shame swept over his countenance, as he continued, bitterly:

"And did Antoinette know all at once? Stop, Beulah, tell me the miserable truth. Did she know all, and still remain away?"

"She knew all that had been communicated to Mr. Graham, when he came; and he has written to her every day. He is now writing to inform her that you are better."

She shrank from giving the pain she was conscious her words inflicted.

"I deserve it all! Yes, ingratitude, indifference and desertion! If I had died, she would have heard it unmoved. Oh, Cornelia, Cornelia, it is a fearful retribution; more bitter than death!" Averting his face, his whole frame trembled with ill-concealed emotion.

"Eugene, you must compose yourself. Remember you jeopardize your life by this sort of excitement."

"Why didn't you let me die? What have I to live for? A name disgraced and a wife unloving and heartless! What has the future but wretchedness and shame?"

"Not unless you will it so. You should want to live to retrieve your character, to take an honorable position, which, hitherto, you have recklessly forfeited; to make the world respect you, your wife revere you, and your child feel that she may be proud of her father! Ah, Eugene, all this the future calls you to do."

He looked up at her as she stood beside him, pale, thin and weary, and his feeble voice faltered, as he asked:

"Beulah, my best friend, my sister, do you quite despise me?"

She laid her hands softly on his, and, stooping down, pressed her lips to his forehead.

"Eugene, once I feared that you had fallen even below my pity; but now I believe you will redeem yourself. I hope that, thoroughly reformed, you will command the respect of all who know you, and realize the proud aspirations I once indulged for you. That you can do this I feel assured; that you will, I do most sincerely trust. I have not yet lost faith in you, Eugene. I hope still."

She left him to ponder in solitude the humiliating result of his course of dissipation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE hours of gradual convalescence were very trying to Beulah, now that the sense of danger no longer nerved her to almost superhuman endurance and exertion. Mr. Graham waited until his adopted son was able to sit up, and then returned to the watering place where his wife remained. Thus the entire charge of the invalid devolved on the tireless friends who watched over him in the hour of peril. Beulah had endeavored to banish the sorrow that pressed so heavily on her heart, and to dispel the gloom and despondency which seemed to have taken possession of the deserted husband. She read, talked, sang to him, and constantly strove to cheer him by painting a future in which the past was to be effectually canceled. Though wellnigh exhausted by incessant care and loss of sleep, she never complained of weariness, and always forced a smile of welcome to her lips when the invalid had his chair wheeled to her side, or tottered out into the dining-room to join her. One morning in August, she sat on the little gallery at the rear of the house, with a table before her, engaged in drawing some of the clusters of blue, white and pink convolvulus which festooned the pillars and balustrade. Eugene sat near her, with his thin face leaned on his hand, his thoughts evidently far removed from flowers. His arm was still in a sling, and he looked emaciated and dejected. Mrs. Williams had been talking to him cheerfully about some money matters he had promised to arrange for her, so soon as he was well enough to go to his office; but, gathering up her working materials, the old lady went into the kitchen, and the two sat for some time in silence. One of his long-drawn sighs arrested Beulah's attention, and she said, kindly:

"What is the matter, brother mine? Are you tired of watching my clumsy fingers? Shall I finish that essay of Macaulay's you were so much interested in yesterday, or will you have another of Bryant's poems?" She laid down her pencil, quite ready to divert his mind by reading.

"You know little of what oppresses me. It is the knowledge of my—, of Antoinette's indifference, which makes the future so joyless, so desolate. Beulah, this has caused my ruin. When I stood by Cornelia's coffin, and recalled her last frantic appeal; when I looked down at her cold face, and remembered her devoted love for her unworthy brother, I vowed never to touch wine again; to absent myself from the associates who had led me to dissipation. Beulah, I was honest, and intended to reform from that hour. But Antoinette's avowed coldness, or, to call it by its proper name, heartless selfishness and fondness for admiration, first disgusted and then maddened

me. I would have gladly spent my evenings quietly, in our elegant home, but she contrived to have it crowded with visitors, as soulless and frivolous as herself. I remonstrated; she was sneering, defiant and unyielding, and assured me she would 'amuse' herself as she thought proper; I followed her example, and went back to the reckless companions who so continually beset my path. I was miserably deceived in Antoinette's character. She was very beautiful, and I was blind to her mental, nay, I may as well say it at once, her moral defects. I believed she was warmly attached to me, and I loved her most devotedly. But no sooner were we married, than I discovered my blind rashness. Cornelia warned me, but what man, fascinated by a beautiful girl, ever listened to counsels that opposed his heart? Antoinette is too intensely selfish to love anything or anybody but herself; she does not even love her child. Strange as it may seem, she is too entirely engrossed by her weak fondness for display and admiration, even to caress her babe. Except at breakfast and dinner, we rarely meet, and then, unless company is present (which is generally the case), our intercourse is studiously cold. Do you wonder that I am hopeless in view of a life passed with such a companion? Oh, that I could blot out the last two years of my existence!"

He groaned, and shaded his face with his hands.

"But, Eugene, probably your reformation and altered course will win you your wife's love and reverence," suggested Beulah, anxious to offer some incentive to exertion.

"I know her nature too well to hope that. A woman who prefers to dance and ride with gentlemen, rather than remain in her luxurious home, with her babe and her duties, cannot be won from her mothlike life. No, no! I despair of happiness from her society and affection, and if at all, must derive it from other sources. My child is the one living blossom amid all my withered hopes; she is the only treasure I have, except your friendship. She shall never blush for her father's degradation. Henceforth, though an unhappy man, I shall prove myself a temperate one. I cannot trust my child's education to Antoinette, she is unworthy the sacred charge; I must fit myself to form her character. Oh, Beulah, if I could make her such a woman as you are, then I could, indeed, bear my lot patiently! I named her Cornelia, but henceforth she shall be called Beulah also, in token of her father's gratitude to his truest friend."

"No, Eugene, call her not after me, lest some of my sorrows come upon her young head. Oh, no! name her not Beulah; let her be called Cornelia. I would not have her soul shrouded as mine has been." Beulah spoke vehemently, and, laying her hand on his arm, she added:

"Eugene, to-day you will leave me, and go back to your own house, to your family; but before you go, I ask you, if not for

your sake, for that of your child, to promise me solemnly, that you will never again touch intoxicating drinks of any kind. Oh, will you promise? Will you reform entirely?"

There was a brief pause, and he answered, slowly:

"I promise, Beulah. Nay, my friend, I swear I will abstain in future. Ah, I will never disgrace my angel child! Never, so help me Heaven!"

The sound of approaching steps interrupted the conversation, and expecting to see Antoinette and her infant, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Graham, Beulah looked up quickly and perceived Mr. Lindsay.

"Does my advent startle you, that you look so pale and breathless?" said he, smiling, as he took her hand.

"I am certainly very much surprised to see you here, sir."

"And I am heartily glad you have come, Reginald," cried Eugene, returning his friend's tight clasp.

"I intended coming to nurse you, Graham, as soon as I heard of the accident, but my mother's illness prevented my leaving home. I need not ask about your arm; I see it still requires cautious handling; but how are you otherwise? Regaining your strength, I hope?"

"Yes, gradually. I am better than I deserve to be, Reginald."

"That remains to be proved in future, Graham. Come, get well as rapidly as possible; I have a plan to submit to you, the earliest day you are strong enough to discuss business topics. Miss Beulah, let me sharpen your pencil."

He took it from her, trimmed it carefully, and handed it back; then drew her portfolio near him, and glanced over the numerous unfinished sketches.

"I have several books, filled with European sketches, which, I think, might afford you some pleasure. They were taken by different persons; and some of the views on the Rhine, and particularly some along the southern shore of Spain, are unsurpassed by any I have seen. You may receive them some day, after I return."

"Thank you; I shall copy them with great pleasure."

Half an hour later a carriage dashed up to the door. Eugene turned pale, and a sudden rigidity seized his features. Beulah gave her guest a quick, meaning glance, and retreated to the gallery, whither he instantly followed her, leaving Eugene to receive his wife without witnesses. Leaning against one of the pillars, Beulah unfastened a wreath of blue convolvulus which Mrs. Williams had twined in her hair an hour before. The delicate petals were withered, and, with a suppressed sigh, she threw them away. Mr. Lindsay drew a letter from his pocket, and handed it to her, saying briefly:

"I was commissioned to give you this, and, knowing the contents, hope a favorable answer."

It was from Clara, urging her to come up the following week and officiate as bridesmaid at her wedding. She could return home with Helen and George Asbury. Beulah read the letter, smiled sadly, and put it in her pocket.

"Will you go?"

"No, sir."

"Why, not? You need a change of air, and the trip would benefit you. You do not probably know how much you have altered in appearance since I saw you. My uncle is coming out to persuade you to go. Can't I succeed without his aid?"

"I could not leave home now. Eugene's illness has prevented my accomplishing some necessary work, and as I consign him to other hands to-day, I must make amends for my long indolence. Thank you for taking charge of my letter, but I cannot think of going."

He perceived that no amount of persuasion would avail, and for an instant a look of annoyance crossed his face. But his brow cleared as he said, with a smile:

"For years I have watched for your articles, and the magazine is a constant companion of my desk. Sometimes I am tempted to criticise your sketches; perhaps I may do so yet, and that in no Boswell spirit, either."

"Doubtless, sir, you would find them very vulnerable to criticism, which nowadays has become a synonym for fault-finding; at least this carping proclivity characterizes the class who seem desirous only of earning reputation as literary Jeffreys. I am aware, sir, that I am very vulnerable."

"Suppose, then, at the next month's literary assize (as you seem disposed to consider it), you find in some of the magazines a severe animadversion upon the spirit of your writings? Dare I do this and still hope for your friendship?"

He watched her closely.

"Certainly, sir. I am not writing merely to see myself in print, nor wholly for remuneration in dollars and cents. I am earnestly searching for truth, and if in my articles you discover error and can correct it, I shall be glad to have you do so, provided you adopt the catholic spirit, which should distinguish such undertakings. Now, if you merely intend to hold me up for ridicule, as thoroughly as possible, I prefer that you let me and my articles rest; but a calm, dispassionate criticism I should not shrink from. I write only what I believe, and if I am in error, I shall be glad to have it corrected."

"Miss Benton, may I venture to correct it without having recourse to the vehicle of public criticism? Will you permit me to discuss with you, here in your quiet home, those vital questions whose solution seems to engage your every thought?"

"When you have nothing else to occupy you, and wish to

while away an hour in literary discussion, you will generally find me home during vacation."

She walked on and joined Eugene in the hall. Antoinette stood in the door, and they merely exchanged bows, while Mr. Graham grasped her hand and earnestly thanked her for the many kindnesses she had rendered to his family. Beulah looked at the composed, beautiful face of the young wife, and then at the thin form of the husband, and said, hastily:

"You owe me no thanks, sir; the claims of true friendship are imperative. In removing to his own house I trust Eugene's improvement may not be retarded."

Antoinette tripped down the steps, and, gathering the flounces of her costly dress, seated herself in the carriage. Mr. Graham bit his lip, colored, and, after a cordial good-by, joined her. Eugene smiled bitterly, and, turning to Beulah, took both her hands in his, saying, feelingly:

"Beulah, I leave your house a wiser, if not less miserable man. I am going to atone for the past; to prove to you that your faith in me is not altogether unmerited. If I am saved from ruin and disgrace, I owe it to you; and to you I shall look for sympathy and encouragement. To you, my best friend, I shall often come for sisterly aid, when clouds gather black and stormy over my miserable home. God bless you, Beulah! I have promised reformation and will keep my promise sacred, if it costs me my life."

He raised her hand to his lips, and, linking his arm in Mr. Lindsay's, left the house and entered the carriage, while the latter mounted his horse and rode slowly away.

"You look weary, child. You must give yourself some rest now," said Mrs. Williams, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"Rest! Ah, yes; if I could find it," returned the girl, taking the comb from the back of her head, and shaking down the folds of hair till it hung round her like a long mourning veil.

"Suppose you try to sleep some," suggested the matron.

"I have some work to do first," said she, drawing a long breath, and wiping the dust from her desk.

Mrs. Williams withdrew, and, clasping her hands over her forehead, Beulah stood looking up, with dim eyes, at the cloudless face that smiled down on her, until she almost fancied the lips parted to address her.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. LINDSAY'S visits grew more frequent. At first Beulah wondered what brought him so often from his distant home to the city, and supposed it must be some legal business which

engaged him; but gradually a different solution dawned upon her mind. She rejected it as the prompting of vanity, but again and again the supposition recurred. The imperturbable gravity and repose of his manner often disconcerted her. It was in vain that she resorted to sarcasm and irony; he was incorrigibly unruffled; in vain she was cold, repellent, haughty; his quiet smile remained unaltered. His superior and thoroughly cultivated intellect and the unaffected simplicity of his manner, characterized by singular candor, rendered him an unusually agreeable companion; but Beulah rebelled against the unobtrusive, yet constant care with which she fancied he watched her. The seclusion of her life and reserve of her nature, conspired to impart a degree of abruptness to her own manners; and to one who understood her character less than Reginald Lindsay, there was an unhesitating sincerity of expression, which might have been termed rudeness. The frequency of his visits attracted the attention of strangers; already the busy tongue of meddling gossip had connected their names; Dr. Asbury, too, bantered her unmercifully upon his nephew's constant pilgrimages to the city; and the result was that Mr. Lindsay's receptions grew colder and less flattering continually. From the first she had not encouraged his visits, and now she positively discouraged them by every intimation which the rules of etiquette justified her in offering. Yet she respected, esteemed and in many things admired him, and readily confessed to her own heart that his society often gave her pleasure.

One winter evening she sat alone by the dining-room fire, with a newspaper in her hand, reading a notice of the last number of the magazine, in which one of her sketches was roughly handled. Of course, she was no better pleased with the unflattering criticism than the majority of writers in such cases. She frowned, bit her lips, and wondered who could have written it. The review was communicated, and the paper had been sent to her by some unknown hand. Once more she read the article, and her brow cleared, while a smile broke over her face. She had recognized a particular *dictum*, and was no longer puzzled. Leaning her head on her palm, she sat looking into the fire, ruminating on the objections urged against her piece; it was the first time she had ever been unfavorably criticised, and this was sufficient food for thought.

Mr. Lindsay came in and stood near her unobserved. They had not met for several weeks, and she was not aware that he was in the city. Charon, who lay on the rug at her feet, growled, and she looked round.

"Good-evening," said her visitor, extending his hand.

She did not accept it, but merely inclined her head, saying:

"Ah, how do you do, sir?"

He laid a package on the table, drew a chair near the hearth,

without looking at her, and calling to Charon, patted his huge head kindly.

"What have you there, Miss Beulah? Merely a newspaper; it seems to interest you intensely. May I see it?"

"I am certainly very much obliged to you, sir, for the chivalrous spirit in which you indited your criticism. I was just pondering it when you entered."

She smiled as she spoke, and shook the paper at him.

"I thought I had feigned a style you would not recognize," he answered, quite unconcernedly.

"You succeeded admirably, with the exception of one pet phrase which betrayed you. Next time recollect that you are very partial to some particular expression, with which I happen to be acquainted, and avoid their introduction."

"I rather think I shall not repeat the experiment; especially as my arguments seem to have failed signally in their design. Are you quite sure that you understand my review perfectly?"

He looked a little curious—she fancied disappointed—and she replied, laughingly:

"Oh, I think I do; it is not so very abstruse."

He leaned forward, took the paper from her, before she was aware of his intention, and threw it into the fire.

She looked surprised, and he offered his hand once more.

"Are we still friends? Will you shake hands with your reviewer?"

She unhesitatingly put her hand in his, and answered:

"Friendship is not a gossamer thread, to be severed by a stroke of the pen."

She endeavored to withdraw her fingers, but he held them firmly, while his blue eyes rested upon her with an expression she by no means liked. Her black brows met in a heavy frown, and her lips parted angrily; he saw it, and instantly released her hand.

"Miss Beulah, my uncle commissioned me to say to you that he received a letter to-day from Dr. Hartwell. It was written during his voyage down the Red Sea, and contained a long farewell, as inland travel would afford no facilities for writing."

He noted the tight clasp in which her fingers locked each other, and the livid paleness of her lips and brow, as the long lashes drooped, and she sat silently listening. Charon laid his head on her knee, and looked up at her. There was a brief silence, and Mr. Lindsay added, slowly:

"My uncle fears he will never return; do you cherish the hope?"

"Yes, he will come back, if his life is spared. It may be many years, but he will come; he will come."

Their eyes met; there was a long, searching look from Mr. Lindsay; she did not shrink from the scrutiny. An expression

of keen sorrow swept over his face, but he conquered his emotion, took the parcel he had brought, and, unwrapping a book, said in his usual quiet tone:

"When I saw you last, you were regretting your inability to procure Sir William Hamilton's 'Philosophy of the Conditioned,' and I have taken the liberty of bringing you my own copy. Read it at your leisure; I shall not need it again soon. I do not offer it as a system which will satisfy your mind by solving all your problems; but I do most earnestly commend his 'Philosophy of the Conditioned' as the surest antidote to the abstractions in which your speculation has involved you. Are you not weary of fruitless, mocking speculation?" He looked at her anxiously.

She raised her colorless face and said, drearily, as she passed her hand over her forehead:

"Weary? Ah, yes! weary as the lonely mariner, tempest-tossed on some pathless ocean, without chart or compass. In my sky, even the star of hope is shrouded. Weary? Yes, in body and mind."

"Then humble your proud intellect; confess your ignorance and inability, and rest in God and Christianity."

She made an impatient gesture, and, turning away, he walked up and down the floor. For some moments neither spoke; finally, he approached her, and continued:

"There is strange significance in the Mosaic record of the Fall. Longing for the fruits of knowledge, whereby the mysteries of God would be revealed, cost man Eden. The first pair ate, knowledge mocked them, and only the curse remained. That primeval curse of desiring to know all things descended to all posterity, and at this instant you exemplify its existence. Ah! you must humble your intellect, if you would have it exalted; must be willing to be guided along unknown paths by other light than that of reason, if you would be happy. Well might Sir William Hamilton exclaim: 'It is this powerful tendency of the most vigorous minds to transcend the sphere of our faculties, which makes a "learned ignorance" the most difficult acquirement, perhaps, indeed, the consummation of knowledge.'"

He sighed as he uttered these words; she said nothing, and, putting his hand gently upon hers, as they lay folded on the table beside her, he added, sadly:

"I had hoped that I could aid you, but I see my efforts are useless; you will not be guided nor influenced by others; are determined to wander on in ever-deepening night, solitary and restless! God help you, Beulah!"

A shudder ran over her, but she made no reply.

He took her cold hands in his.

"And now we part. Since the evening I first saw you with

your basket of strawberries, I have cherished the hope that I might one day be more than a friend. You have constantly shown me that I was nothing more to you; I have seen it all along, but still I hoped; and notwithstanding your coldness, I shall continue to hope. My love is too entirely yours to be readily effaced. I can wait patiently. Beulah, you do not love me now; perhaps never can, but I shall at least cling to the hope. I shall not come again; shall not weary you with professions and attentions. I know your nature, and even had I the power, would not persuade you to give me your hand now. But time may change your feelings; on this frail tenure I rest my hopes. Meantime, should circumstances occur which demand the aid or counsel of devoted friendship, may I ask you to feel no hesitancy in claiming any assistance I can render? And, Beulah, at any instant, a line, a word can recall me. The separation will be very painful to me, but I cannot longer obtrude myself on your presence. If, as I earnestly hope, the hour, however distant, should come, when you desire to see me, oh, Beulah, how gladly will I hasten to you——”

“We can never be more than friends; never!” cried Beulah.

“You think so now, and perhaps I am doomed to disappointment; but, without your sanction, I shall hope it. Good-by.” He pressed his lips to her hand and walked away.

Beulah heard the closing of the little gate, and then, for the first time, his meaning flashed upon her mind. He believed she loved her guardian; fancied that long absence would obliterate his image from her heart, and that, finally, grown indifferent to one who might never return, she would give her love to him whose constancy merited it. Genuine delicacy of feeling prevented his expressing all this, but she was conscious now that only this induced his unexpected course toward herself. A burning flush suffused her face as she exclaimed:

“Oh, how unworthy I am of such love as his! how utterly undeserving!”

Soon after, opening the book he had brought at the place designated, she drew the lamp near her and began its perusal. Hour after hour glided away, and not until the last page was concluded did she lay it aside. The work contained very little that was new; the same trains of thought had passed through her mind more than once before; but here they were far more clearly and forcibly expressed.

She drew her chair to the window, threw up the sash and looked out. It was wintry midnight, and the sky blazed with its undying watchfires. This starry page was the first her childish intellect had puzzled over. She had, from early years, gazed up into the glittering temple of night, and asked: “Whence came you, silent worlds, floating in solemn grandeur along the blue, waveless ocean of space? Since the universe sprang

phoenix-like from that dim chaos, which may have been but the charnel-house of dead worlds, those unfading lights have burned on, bright as when they sang together at the creation. And I have stretched out my arms helplessly to them, and prayed to hear just once their unceasing chant of praise to the Lord of Glory. Will they shine on forever? or are they, indeed, God's light-bearers, set to illumine the depths of space and blaze a path along which the soul may travel to its God? Will they one day flicker and go out?" To every thoughtful mind, these questions propound themselves, and Beulah especially had essayed to answer them. Science had named the starry hosts, and computed their movements with wonderful skill; but what could it teach her of their origin and destiny? Absolutely nothing. And how stood her investigations in the more occult departments of psychology and ontology? An honest seeker of truth, what had these years of inquiry and speculation accomplished? Let her answer as, with face bowed on her palms, her eyes roved over the midnight sky.

"Once I had some principles, some truths clearly defined, but now I know nothing distinctly, believe nothing. The more I read and study, the more obscure seem the questions I am toiling to answer. Is this increasing intricacy the reward of an earnestly inquiring mind? Is this to be the end of all my glorious aspirations? Have I come to this? 'Thus far, and no farther.' I have stumbled on these boundaries many times, and now must I rest here? Oh, is this my recompense? Can this be all? All!" Smothered sobs convulsed her frame.

She had long before rejected a "revealed code" as unnecessary; the next step was to decipher nature's symbols, and thus grasp God's hidden laws; but here the old trouble arose; how far was "individualism" allowable and safe? To reconcile the theories of rationalism, she felt, was indeed a herculean task, and she groped on into deeper night. Now and then, her horizon was bestarred, and, in her delight, she shouted Eureka! But when the telescope of her infallible reason was brought to bear upon the coldly glittering points, they flickered and went out. More than once, a flaming comet, of German manufacture, trailed in glory athwart her dazzled vision; but close observation resolved the gilded nebula, and the nucleus mocked her. Doubt engendered doubt; the death of one difficulty was the instant birth of another. Wave after wave of skepticism surged over her soul, until the image of a great personal God was swept from its altar. But atheism never yet usurped the sovereignty of the human mind; in all ages, moldering vestiges of protean deism confront the giant specter, and every nation under heaven has reared its fane to the "unknown God." Beulah had striven to enthrone in her desecrated soul, the huge, dim, shapeless phantom of pantheism, and had turned eagerly

to the system of Spinoza. The heroic grandeur of the man's life and character had strangely fascinated her; and now, that idol of a "substance, whose two infinite attributes were extension and thought," mocked her; and she hurled it from its pedestal, and looked back wistfully to the pure faith of her childhood. A Godless world; a Godless woman. She took up the lamp, and retired to her own room. On all sides, books greeted her; here was the varied lore of dead centuries; here she had held communion with the great souls entombed in these dusty pages. Here, wrestling alone with those grim puzzles, she had read out the vexed and vexing questions, in this debating club of the moldering dead, and endeavored to make them solve them. These well-worn volumes, with close "marginalias," echoed her inquiries, but answered them not to her satisfaction. Was her life to be thus passed in feverish toil, and ended as by a leap out into a black, shoreless abyss? Like a spent child, she threw her arms on the mantelpiece and wept uncontrollably, murmuring:

"Oh, better die now, than live as I have lived, in perpetual strugglings! What is life worth without peace of mind, without hope; and what hope have I? Diamonded webs of sophistry can no longer entangle; like Noah's dove, my soul has fluttered among them, striving in vain for a sure hold to perch upon; but unlike it, I have no ark to flee to. Weary and almost hopeless, I would fain believe that this world is indeed as a deluge, and in it there is no ark of refuge but the Bible. It is true, I did not see this soul's ark constructed; I know nothing of the machinery employed, and no more than Noah's dove can I explore and fully understand its secret chambers; yet, all untutored, the exhausted bird sought safety in the incomprehensible, and was saved. As to the mysteries of revelation and inspiration, why, I meet mysteries, turn which way I will. Man, earth, time, eternity, God, are all inscrutable mysteries. My own soul is a mystery unto itself, and so long as I am impotent to fathom its depths, how shall I hope to unfold the secrets of the universe?"

She had rejected Christian theism, because she could not understand how God had created the universe out of nothing. True, "with God all things are possible," but she could not understand this creation out of nothing, and therefore would not believe it. Yet (oh, inconstancy of human reasoning!) she had believed that the universe created laws: that matter gradually created mind. This was the inevitable result of pantheism, for, according to geology, there was a primeval period, when neither vegetable nor animal life existed; when the earth was a huge mass of inorganic matter. Of two incomprehensibilities, which was the more plausible? To-night this question recurred to her mind with irresistible force, and as her eyes

wandered over the volumes she had so long consulted, she exclaimed:

“Oh, philosophy! thou hast mocked my hungry soul; thy gilded fruits have crumbled to ashes in my grasp. In lieu of the holy faith of my girlhood, thou hast given me but dim, doubtful conjecture, cold metaphysical abstractions, intangible shadows, that flit along my path, and lure me on to deeper morasses. Oh, what is the shadow of death, in comparison with the starless night which has fallen upon me, even in the morning of my life! My God, save me! Give me light: of myself I can know nothing!”

Her proud intellect was humbled, and falling on her knees, for the first time in many months, a sobbing prayer went up to the throne of the living God; while the vast clockwork of stars looked in on a pale brow and lips, where heavy drops of moisture glistened.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Four years had passed since Eugene Graham returned to his home, after his severe illness, and now, as he sits alone in his library, with a bundle of legal documents before him, it is not difficult to perceive that his promise has been held sacred. Through the suggestion of Mr. Lindsay, and the persuasions of Beulah, he had closely applied himself to the study of law immediately after his recovery. Hopeless of happiness in his home, ambition became the ruling passion, and scourged him on to unceasing exertion. The aspirations of his boyhood revived; the memory of his humiliating course goaded him to cover the past with the garlands of fame; and consciousness of unusual talents assured him of final success. Mr. Graham no longer opposed the design, as formerly, but facilitated its execution to the utmost of his ability. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that earnest application soon procured his admission to the bar. His efforts were redoubled, and, ere long, his eloquence obtained for him a connection with one of the most prominent members of the profession. The world wondered at this complete revolution; many doubted its continuance; but, step by step, he climbed the ladder to eminence, and merited the applause which the public lavished upon him. Success only inflamed his ambition, and it became evident he aimed at political renown. Nature had fitted him for the political arena, had endowed him with oratorical powers of no ordinary stamp, and, though long dormant, they were not impaired by his inertia. It was fortunate for him that an exciting presidential canvass afforded numerous opportunities for the development of these, and at its close he found himself pos-

sessed of an enviable reputation. To a certain extent, his wife was elated with his success; she was proud of his acknowledged talent, but her selfish nature was utterly incapable of the tenderness and the sincere affection he demanded. Their alienation was complete. No bickerings disturbed the serene atmosphere of their home, because mutual indifference precluded the necessity. Mrs. Graham gave parties, and attended them; rode, danced, spent her summers at fashionable watering places, and her winters in a round of folly and dissipation, while her husband pursued his profession, careless of her movements, rarely in her company. In the lady's conduct, the circle in which she moved saw nothing reprehensible. She dressed superbly, gave elegant entertainments, and was, *par excellence*, the leader of *bon-ton*. True, she was quite as much of a belle as any young lady in the city, and received the attentions and flattery of gentlemen as unreservedly, nay, delightedly, as though she had no neglected husband and child at home, who had claims upon her; but this sort of conjugal indifference was in vogue, and as she frowned upon, or smiled on, some family laboriously toiling to reach her circle, her "clique" blindly followed her example, and humored her whims. As regarded her deportment toward her husband, one alteration was perceptible; she respected—almost feared him; shrank from his presence, and generally contrived to fill the house with company when she was, for short intervals, at home. He ceased to upbraid, or even remonstrate; his days were spent in the courtroom or his office, and his evenings in his library. She dressed as extravagantly as she chose; he made no comments, paid her accounts, and grew more taciturn and abstracted day by day.

Eugene Graham's love and tenderness were all bestowed on his daughter, a beautiful child, not yet five years old; the sole companion of the hours spent at home, she became his idol.

It was one sunny afternoon that he finished copying some papers, necessary in a case to be defended the following day. The sunshine, stealing through the shutters, fell on his lofty brow, pale from continued study; his whole countenance bespoke a nature saddened, vexed, but resolute, and, leaning forward, he touched the bellrope. As he did so, there came quick footsteps pattering along the hall; the door was pushed open, and a little fairy form, with a head of rich auburn ringlets, peeped in cautiously, while a sweet, childish voice asked eagerly:

"May I come now, father? Have you done writing? I won't make a noise; indeed I won't."

The gloom fled from his face, and he held out his arms to her, saying:

"I have done writing; you may come now, my darling."

She sprang into his lap, and threw her little, snowy arms about his neck, kissing him rapturously, and passing her fragile

fingers through his hair. She resembled him closely, having the same classical contour, and large, soft, dark eyes. He returned her caresses with an expression of almost adoring fondness, stroking her curls with a light, gentle touch. The evening was warm, and large drops stood on his forehead. She noticed it, and, standing on his knee, took the corner of her tiny embroidered apron and wiped away the moisture, kissing the forehead as she did so. A servant looked in at the door.

"Did you ring, sir?"

"Yes; tell Philip I want my buggy."

"Oh, you are going to ride? Can I go? And will we go to see Aunt Beulah—will we?" She looked at him earnestly.

"Would you like to go there, Cornelia?"

"Oh, yes! I always like to go there. I love her, she is so good! Let's go to see her, won't you?"

"Yes; you shall go with me, my darling."

He bent down to kiss her coral lips, and just then Mrs. Graham swept into the room. She was attired in an elegant riding habit of dark purple, while a velvet hat of the same color, with a long, drooping plume, shaded her face. Her hands were incased in delicate kid gauntlets, which fitted with perfect exactness. She was a beautiful woman, and the costume heightened her loveliness. She started slightly on perceiving her husband, and said, hastily:

"I thought you were at your office. Cornelia, what on earth have you done with my riding whip, you mischievous little wretch? You lost it once before. Go find it; I am waiting for it. Go this instant!"

"I don't know where it is," returned the child, making no effort to leave her father's arms.

Eugene glanced up at his wife; his eyes wandered over her becoming and beautiful dress, then went back to the sunny face of his child.

An angry flush dyed Antoinette's cheek, as she observed her daughter's indifference.

"Where is my whip, I say? Flora saw you with it yesterday, whipping that hobby-horse. I told you to keep your hands off of it, didn't I? If you don't go and find it quick, I'll box you soundly, you meddlesome little brat!"

"I haven't had it since you told me I shouldn't play with it. Flora tells a story," answered Cornelia, sobbing.

"You did have it!" cried the angry mother, shaking her hand threateningly.

"Did you see her with it?" asked Eugene, rising, with the child in his arms.

"I know she had it!"

"Did you see her with it, I asked you."

"No, but Flora did, and that is all the same; besides, I——"

"Here is the whip, ma'am. I found it last week in the hall, behind a chair, and put it in the cane stand. The last time you went to ride you put it and your gloves on a chair in the hall, and went into the parlor to see some company. Flora picked up the gloves and carried them upstairs, but didn't see the whip."

John, the dining-room servant, handed her a small whip, with mother-of-pearl handle, inlaid with gold.

"It is no such thing!" cried Mrs. Graham, gathering up the folds of her habit, and coloring with vexation.

John shrugged his shoulders and retired, and his mistress sailed out to the front door, where her horse and her escort awaited her.

"Run and get your hat and cape, Cornelia; I see the buggy coming round the corner."

Eugene wiped away the teardrops glittering on her rosy cheeks, and she sprang off to obey him; while in the interim he sent for Flora and gave her to understand that he would allow no repetition of the deception he had accidentally discovered. The maid retired, highly incensed, of course, and resolved to wreak vengeance on both John and Cornelia; and Eugene took his seat in the buggy in no particularly amiable mood. They found Beulah in her little flower garden, pruning some luxuriant geraniums. She threw down her knife and hastened to meet them, and all three sat down on the steps.

Four years had brought sorrow to that cottage home; had hushed the kind accents of the matron; stilled the true heart that throbbed so tenderly for her orphan charge, and had seen her laid to rest in a warm, grassy slope of the cemetery. She died peaceably three months before the day of which I write; died exhorting Eugene and Beulah so to pass the season of probation that they might be reunited beyond the grave. In life she had humbly exemplified the teachings of our Saviour, and her death was a triumphant attestation of the joy and hope which only the Christian religion can afford in the final hour.

To Beulah the blow was peculiarly severe, and never had the sense of her orphanage been more painfully acute than when she returned from the funeral to her lonely home. But to sorrow her nature was inured; she had learned to bear grief, and only her mourning dress and subdued manner told how deeply she felt this trial. Now she took Cornelia in her arms and kissed her fondly, while the child returned her caresses with a warmth which proved how sincerely she loved her.

"May I have some flowers, auntie?" cried she, patting Beulah's pale cheek with her plump, dimpled hands.

"Yes, just as many as you can carry home. Go gather some."

She sprang off, and the two sat watching the flutter of her white dress among the flower beds. She piled her little apron

as full as possible, and came back panting and delighted. Beulah looked down at the beautiful, beaming face, and, twining one of the silky curls over her finger, said, musingly:

"Eugene, she always reminds me of Lilly. Do you see the resemblance?"

"Not in her features; in size and gay heedlessness of manner she is like Lilly, as I saw her last."

"Yes, Lilly's eyes were blue, and your child's are dark, like your own; but she never comes up and puts her arms round my neck without recalling bygone years. I could shut my eyes, and fancy my lost darling was once more mine. Ah! how carefully memory gathers up the golden links of childhood, and weaves the chain that binds our hearts to the olden time! Sometimes I think I am only dreaming, and shall wake to a happy reality. If I could have Lilly back, oh, what a sunshine it would shed over my heart and life! But this may not be; and I can only love Cornelia instead."

Her long, black lashes were weighed down with unshed tears, and there was a touching sadness in her low voice. Cornelia stood by her side, busily engaged in dressing Beulah's hair with some of the roses and scarlet geraniums she had gathered. She noticed the unusual melancholy written in the quiet face, and said, impatiently:

"With all my flowers, you won't look gay! It must be this black dress. Don't wear such ugly, dark things: I wish you wouldn't. I want to see you look beautiful, like mother."

"Cornelia, go and break that cluster of yellow berries yonder," said her father; and when she had left them, he turned to his companion and asked:

"Beulah, have you reflected on what I said the last time I saw you?"

"Yes, Eugene."

"With what result?"

"My former decision is only confirmed, the more I ponder the subject."

"You have seen nothing of Reginald, then? He was here, on some legal business, last week."

"No; he has been in the city several times during the last four years, but never comes here; and except that one letter, which I did not answer, I have heard nothing from him. I doubt whether we ever meet again."

"You are a strange woman! Such devotion as his would have won any other being. He is as much attached to you now as on the day he first offered you his hand. Upon my word, your obstinacy provokes me. He is the noblest man I ever knew. Everything that I should suppose a woman of your nature would admire; and yet, year after year, you remain apparently as indifferent as ever."

"And it were a miserable return for such unmerited love to marry him merely from gratitude. I do admire him, but cannot marry him. I told him so four years ago."

"But why did you not at least answer his letter?"

"Because his acceptance was made the condition of an answer; a negative one was not expected, and I had no other to give."

"Pardon me, Beulah; but why do you not love him?"

"A strange question, truly. My heart is not the tool of my will."

"Beulah, do you intend to spend your life solitary and joyless, cut off, as you are here, from society, and dependent on books and music for sympathy? Why will you not marry Reginald, and make his home happy?"

"Eugene, I have told you before that I could not accept him, and told you why. Let the subject drop; it is an unpleasant one to me. I am happier here than I could possibly be anywhere else. Think you I would marry merely for an elegant home and an intellectual companion? Never! I will live and die here in this little cottage, rather than quit it with such motives. You are mistaken in supposing that Mr. Lindsay is still attached to me. It has been nearly two years since he wrote that letter, and from Georgia I hear that the world believes he is soon to marry a lady residing somewhere near him. I think it more than probable the report is true, and hope most sincerely it may be so. Now, Eugene, don't mention the subject again, will you?"

"It is generally believed that he will be elected to Congress; next month will decide it. The chances are all in his favor," persisted Eugene.

"Yes; so I judged from the papers," said she, coolly, and then added: "And one day I hope to see you, or rather hear of you, in Washington by his side. I believe I shall be gratified; and, oh, Eugene, what a proud moment it will be to me! How I shall rejoice in your merited eminence."

Her face kindled as she spoke, but the shadows deepened in his countenance as he answered moodily:

"Perhaps I may, but fame and position cannot lighten a loaded heart, or kindle the sacred flame of love in a dreary home. When a man blindly wrecks his happiness on the threshold of life by a fatal marriage, no after exertion can atone or rectify the one mistake."

"Hush! she will hear you," said Beulah, pointing to the little girl, who was slowly approaching them.

A bitter smile parted his lips.

"She is my all; yet precious as she is to my sad heart, I would gladly lay her in her grave to-morrow sooner than see her live to marry an uncongenial spirit, or know that her ra-

diant face was clouded with sorrow, like mine. God grant that her father's wretched lot may warn her of the quicksands which nearly engulfed him." He took the child in his arms, as if to shield her from some impending danger, and said, hurriedly:

"Are you ready to go home?"

"Is it so very late?"

"It is time we were going back, I think."

Beulah tied on the hat and cape, which had been thrown aside, and saw them ride away.

There, in the golden twilight, she mused on the changes time bore on its swift chariot. The gorgeous dreamings of her girlhood had faded like the summer clouds above her to the somber hue of reality. From the hour when her father (a poor artist, toiling over canvas to feed his children) had, in dying accents, committed the two to God's care, she only remembered sorrow up to the time that Dr. Hartwell took her to his home. Her life there was the one bright oasis in her desert past. Then she left it a woman, and began the long struggle with poverty and trials over again. In addition, skepticism threw its icy shadow over her. She had toiled in the cavernous mines of metaphysics hopelessly; and finally returning to the holy religion of Jesus Christ, her weary spirit found rest. Ah, that rest which only the exhausted wanderer through the burning wastes of speculation can truly comprehend and appreciate. She had been ambitious, and labored to obtain distinction as a writer; and this, under various fictitious signatures, was hers. She still studied and wrote, but with another aim, now, than mere desire of literary fame; wrote to warn others of the snares in which she had so long been entangled, and to point young seekers after truth to the only sure fountain. She was very lonely, but not unhappy. Georgia and Helen were both happily married, and she saw them very rarely; but their parents were still her counselors and friends. At Mrs. Williams's death, they had urged her to remove to their house, but she preferred remaining at the little cottage, at least until the expiration of the year. She still kept her place in the schoolroom; not now as assistant, but as principal in that department, and the increased salary rendered rigid economy and music lessons no longer necessary. Her intense love of beauty, whether found in nature or art, was a constant source of pleasure; books, music, painting, flowers, all contributed largely to her happiness. The grim puzzles of philosophy no longer perplexed her mind; sometimes they thrust themselves before her, threatening as the sphinx of old; but she knew that here they were insolvable; that at least her reason was no *œdipus*, and a genuine philosophy induced her to put them aside; and anchoring her hopes of God and eternity in the religion of Christ, she drew from the beautiful world in which she lived much pure enjoyment. Once she had worshiped

the universe; now she looked beyond the wonderful temple whose architecture, from its lowest foundations of rock to its starry dome of sky, proclaimed the God of revelation; and loving its beauty and grandeur, felt that it was but a home for a season, where the soul could be fitted for yet more perfect dwelling places. Her face reflected the change which a calm reliance on God had wrought in her feelings. The restless, anxious expression had given place to quiet. The eyes had lost their strained, troubled look; the brow was unruffled, the face serene. Serene, reader, but not happy and sparkling as it might have been. All the shadows were not yet banished from her heart; there was one spectral form which thrust itself continually before her, and kept her cheek pale and rendered her lip at times unsteady. She had struggled bravely against this one remaining sorrow; but, as time rolled on, its power and influence only increased. Even now, in this quiet hour, when a holy hush had fallen on all nature, and twilight wrapped its soft, purple veil around her, this haunting memory came to stir the depths of her heart. Charon walked slowly up the steps, and laying down at her feet, nestled his head against her. Then, fancy painted a dreary picture, which

“Seemed all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low, large moon.”

It was the thought of a lonely man, wandering without aim or goal in far distant deserts; away from home and friends; joyless, hopeless. One who was dearer to her than all on earth beside; who had left her in anger, and upon whose loved face she might look no more. For three years no tidings had come of his wanderings; none knew his fate; and, perhaps, even then his proud head lay low beneath the palms of the Orient, or was pillowed on the coral crags of distant seas. This thought was one she was unable to endure; her features quivered, her hands grasped each other in a paroxysm of dread apprehension, and while a deep groan burst from her lips, she bowed her face on the head of his last charge, his parting gift. The consciousness of his unbelief tortured her. Even in eternity, they might meet no more; and this fear cost her hours of agony, such as no other trial had ever inflicted. From the moment of her return to the Bible and to prayer this struggle began, and for three years she had knelt, morning and evening, and entreated Almighty God to shield and guide the wanderer; to scatter the mists of unbelief which shrouded his mind. Constantly her prayers went up, mingled with tears and sobs, and as weary months wore on the petitions grew more impassioned. Her anxiety increased daily,

and finally it became the one intense, absorbing wish of her heart to see her guardian again. His gloom, his bitterness, were all forgotten; she only remembered his unceasing care and kindness, his noble generosity, his brilliant smile, which was bestowed on her. Pressing her face against Charon's head, she murmured pleadingly:

"Oh, Father, protect him from suffering and death! Guide him safely home. Give me my guardian back. Oh, Father, give me my wandering friend once more!"

CHAPTER XXX.

"TOLD that coat for me, my dear; there, give it to me, I believe there is room in this trunk for it."

Mrs. Asbury took one of her husband's coats from Beulah's hands, and carefully packed it away.

"How long will you be absent, do you suppose?"

"Probably not longer than a month. The doctor thinks a few days at Saratoga will invigorate him. If you had consented to go we had intended spending a week at Niagara. I am sorry you will not go, Beulah; you would enjoy the trip, and, moreover, the change would benefit you. Why do you so pertinaciously reject that legacy of Cornelia's? The money has been in my husband's hands for some years untouched, and Mr. Graham said, not long since, that you might just as well accept it, for he would never receive a cent of it in return. The original sum has been considerably augmented by judicious investments, and would place you above the necessity of labor, if you would accept it. Your refusal wounds Mr. Graham; he told me so last week. It was Cornelia's particular request that you should have that amount, and he is anxious to see you in possession of it. I told him of your suggestion, that he should add this legacy to the sum already given to the asylum; but he vowed solemnly he would have nothing to do with it. If you choose to give it to the asylum, you could do so, of course, the money was yours; he would never touch a cent of it. Beulah, if you will not think me officious, I will say, candidly, that I think you ought to accept it. That is, use it, for the legacy has been left, whether you employ it or not."

Beulah looked grave and troubled, but made no reply.

Mrs. Asbury finished packing the trunk, locked it, and, turning toward the door, said:

"I am going upstairs to see about the furniture in that room which Georgia calls the 'Pitti Gallery.' Come with me, my dear."

She led the way, and Beulah followed, until they reached a large apartment in the third story, the door of which Mrs. As-

bury unlocked. As they entered, Beulah started on seeing the statuary and paintings with which she was so familiar in former years; and in one corner of the room stood the melodeon, carefully covered. A quantity of tissue paper lay on the floor, and Mrs. Asbury began to cover the paintings by pinning the sheets together. Beulah took off her gloves and assisted; there was silence for some time, but on lifting a piece of drapery Mrs. Asbury exposed the face of a portrait which Beulah recognized from the peculiarity of the frame as the one that had hung over the mantel in her guardian's study. Paper and pins fell from her fingers, and, drawing a deep breath, she gazed upon the face she had so long desired to see. She traced a slight resemblance to Antoinette in the faultless features; the countenance was surpassingly beautiful. It was a young, girlish face, sparkling with joyousness, bewitching in its wonderful loveliness. The eloquent eyes were strangely, almost wildly brilliant; the full crimson lips possessed that rare outline one sees in old pictures, and the cheek, tinted like a seashell, rested on one delicate, dimpled hand. Beulah looked, and grew dizzy. This was his wife; this the portrait he had kept shrouded so long and so carefully. How he must have worshiped that radiant young bride.

Mrs. Asbury noticed her emotion, and asked with some surprise:

"Did you never see this before?"

"No; it was always covered, and hung too high for me to lift the crape." Beulah's eyes were riveted on the canvas. Mrs. Asbury watched her a moment, and said:

"It is an undetermined question in my mind whether beauty, such as this, is not a curse. In this instance assuredly it proved so, for it wrecked the happiness of both husband and wife. My dear child, do you know your guardian's history?"

"I know nothing of him, save that he is my best friend."

"When I first saw Guy Hartwell, he was one of the noblest men I ever met; commanding universal admiration and esteem. It was before his marriage; he was remarkably handsome, as you can readily imagine he must have been, and his manners possessed a singular fascination for all who came within the circle of his acquaintance. Even now, after the lapse of ten years, I remember his musical, ringing laugh; a laugh I have never heard since. His family were aristocratic and wealthy, and Guy was his mother's idol. She was a haughty, imperious woman, and her 'boy,' as she fondly termed him, was her pride. His only sister (Mrs. Chilton, or rather Mrs. Lockhart), was his senior, and he had a younger brother, Harry, who was extremely wild; ran away from home, and spent most of his time at sea. Guy was naturally of a happy, genial temperament; fond of study; fond of art, flowers, poetry, everything that was noble

and beautiful that could minister to highly cultivated tastes. Mr. Chilton was unfortunate in his speculations; lost his fortune, and died soon after Pauline's birth, leaving his wife and child dependent on her mother and brother. May and the old lady often disagreed, and only Guy could harmonize their discords. During a visit to New Orleans, he accidentally met the original of this portrait; her family were almost destitute, but he aided them very liberally. She was very beautiful, and in an unlucky hour he determined to marry her. She was a mere child, and he placed her for a while at a school, where she enjoyed every educational advantage. He was completely fascinated; seemed to think only of Creola, and hastened the marriage. His mother and sister bitterly opposed the match, ridiculed his humble and portionless bride; but he persisted, and brought her here, a beautiful, heedless girl. Guy built that house, and his mother and sister occupied one near him, which was burned before you knew anything about them. Of course his wife went constantly into society, and before six months elapsed poor Guy discovered that he had made a fatal mistake. She did not love him, had married him merely for the sake of an elegant home and money to lavish as her childish whims dictated. Ah, Beulah! it makes my heart ache to think of the change this discovery wrought in Guy's nature. He was a proud man, naturally, but now he became repulsive, cold and austere. The revolution in his deportment and appearance was almost incredible. His wife was recklessly imprudent, and launched into the wildest excesses which society sanctioned. When he endeavored to restrain her, she rebelled, and without his knowledge carried on a flirtation with one whom she had known previous to her marriage. I believe she was innocent in her folly, and merely thoughtlessly fed her vanity with the adulation excited by her beauty. Poor child, she might have learned discretion, but unfortunately Mrs. Chilton had always detested her, and now, watching her movements, she discovered Creola's clandestine meetings with the gentleman whom her husband had forbidden her to recognize as an acquaintance. Instead of exerting herself to rectify the difficulties in her brother's home, she apparently exulted in the possession of facts which allowed her to taunt him with his wife's imprudence and indifference. He denied the truth of her assertions; she dared him to watch her conduct, and obtained a note which enabled him to return home one day at an unusually early hour, and meet the man he had denounced in his own parlor. Guy ordered him out of the house, and, without addressing his wife, rode back to see his patients; but that night he learned from her that before he ever met her an engagement existed between herself and the man he so detested. He was poor, and her mother had persuaded her to marry Guy for his fortune. She seemed

to grow frantic, cursed the hour of her marriage, professed sincere attachment to the other, and, I firmly believe, became insane from that moment. Then and there they parted. Creola returned to her mother, but died suddenly a few weeks after leaving her husband. They had been married but a year. I have always thought her mind diseased, and it was rumored that her mother died insane. Doubtless Guy's terrible rage drove her to desperation; though he certainly had cause to upbraid. I have often feared that he would meet the object of his hatred, and once, and only once, afterwards, that man came to the city. Why, I never knew, but my husband told me that he saw him at a concert here some years ago. Poor Guy! how he suffered; yet how silently he bore it; how completely he sheathed his heart of fire in icy vestments. He never alluded to the affair in the remotest manner; never saw her after that night. He was sitting in our library, waiting to see my husband, when he happened to open the letter announcing her death. I was the only person present, and noticed that a change passed over his countenance; I spoke to him, but he did not reply; I touched him, but he took no notice whatever, and sat for at least an hour without moving a muscle, or uttering a word. Finally George came and spoke to him appealingly. He looked up and smiled. Oh, what a smile! May I never see such another; it will haunt me while I live! Without a word he folded the letter, replaced it in the envelope, and left us. Soon after his mother died, and he went immediately to Europe. He was absent two years, and came back so stern, so cynical, so unlike his former self, I scarcely knew him. Mrs. Chilton took charge of his house from the hour of his separation from Creola, but they were not congenial. He was vastly her superior, save in intellect, which none of the Hartwell family ever lacked. My husband is very much attached to Guy; thinks he has not an equal, yet mourns over the blight which fell upon him in the very morn of his glorious manhood. About a year after his return from Europe he took you to his house as an adopted child. I wondered at it, for I knew how embittered his whole soul had become. But the heart must have an idol; he was desolate and miserable, and took you home to have something to love and interest him. You never knew him in the pride of his being, for, though comparatively young in years, he had grown prematurely old in feeling before you saw him. Poor Guy! may a merciful and loving God preserve him wherever he may be, and bring him to a knowledge of that religion which alone can comfort a nature like his; so noble, so gifted, yet so injured, so embittered."

She brushed away the tears that stood on her cheeks, and looked sorrowfully at the portrait of the unfortunate young wife.

Beulah sat with her face partially averted, and her eyes shaded with her hand; once or twice her lips moved, and a shiver ran over her. She looked up, and said, abruptly:

"Leave the key of this room with me, will you? I should like to come here occasionally."

"Certainly, come as often as you choose; and here on this bunch is the key of the melodeon. Take it, also; the instrument needs dusting, I dare say, for it has never been opened since Guy left, nearly five years ago. There, the clock struck two, and the boat leaves at four; there, too, is my husband's foot-step. Come, my dear, we must go down. Take these keys until I return."

She gave them to her, and they descended to the dining-room, where the doctor awaited them.

"Beulah, what are you going to do with yourself next year? You must not think of living in that cottage alone. Since Mrs. Williams's death, you should abandon the thought of keeping house. It will not do, child, for you to live there by yourself." So said the doctor, a short time before he bade her adieu.

"I don't know, yet what I shall do. I am puzzled about a home."

"You need not be; come and live in my house, as I begged you to do long ago. Alice and I will be heartily glad to have you. Child, why should you hesitate?"

"I prefer a home of my own, if circumstances permitted it. You and Mrs. Asbury have been very kind in tendering me a home in your house, and I do most sincerely thank you both for your friendly interest, but I——"

"Oh, Beulah, I should be so very glad to have you always with me. My dear child, come."

Mrs. Asbury passed her arm affectionately around the girl's waist. Beulah looked at her with trembling lips, and said hastily:

"Will you take me as a boarder?"

"I would rather take you as a friend—as a daughter."

"Not a bit of it, Alice. She shall pay the highest possible board. Don't imagine, Miss Independence, that I expected for a moment to offer you a home gratis. Pay board? That you shall; always in advance, and candles, and fires, and the use of my library, and the benefit of my explanations, and conversation charged as 'extras,'" cried the doctor, shaking his fist at her.

"Then, sir, I engage rooms."

"Will you really come, my child?" asked Mrs. Asbury, kissing the orphan's pale cheek tenderly.

"Gladly, as a boarder, and very grateful for such a privilege."

"Beulah, on reflection, I think I can possibly take Charon

for half price; though I must confess to numerous qualms of conscience at the bare suggestion of receiving such an 'infernal' character into my household."

"Thank you," said she, and saw them depart for Saratoga, whither Georgia and Helen had preceded them. Several weeks elapsed without her receiving any tidings, and then a letter came giving her information of a severe illness which had attacked the doctor immediately after his arrival in New York. He was convalescing rapidly when his wife wrote, and in proof thereof subjoined a postscript, in his scrawling hand and wonted bantering style. Beulah laughed over it, refolded the letter, and went into her little garden to gather a bouquet for one of her pupils who had recently been quite sick. She wore a white muslin apron over her black dress, and soon filled it with ver-bena, roses and geranium sprigs. Sitting down on the steps, she began to arrange them, and soon became absorbed in her occupation. Presently a shadow fell on the step; she glanced up, and the flowers dropped from her fingers, while an exclamation of surprise escaped her.

Mr. Lindsay held out his hand.

"After four years of absence, of separation, have you no word of welcome?"

She gave him both hands, and said eagerly:

"Oh, yes, I am very glad to see you again; very glad that I have an opportunity of congratulating you on your signal success. I am heartily glad my friend is soon to enter Congressional halls. Accept my most sincere congratulations on your election."

A sudden flush rose to his temples, and clasping her hands tightly, he exclaimed, passionately:

"Oh, Beulah, your congratulations mock me. I come to offer you, once more, my hand, my heart, my honors, if I have any. I have waited patiently: no, not patiently, but still I have waited, for some token of remembrance from you, and could bear my suspense no longer. Will you share the position which has been accorded me recently? Will you give me this hand which I desire more intensely than the united honors of the universe beside? Beulah, has my devoted love won me your affection? Will you go with me to Washington?"

"I cannot! I cannot."

"Cannot? Oh, Beulah, I would make you a happy wife, if it cost me my life."

"No. I could not be happy as your wife. It is utterly impossible. Mr. Lindsay, I told you long ago you could never be more than a friend."

"And have years wrought no change in your heart?"

"Years have strengthened my esteem, my sincere friendship; but more than this, all time cannot accomplish."

"Your heart is tenacious of its idol," he answered, moodily.

"It rebels, sir, now as formerly, at the thought of linking my destiny with that of one whom I never loved." Beulah spoke rapidly, her cheeks burned and her eyes sparkled with displeasure.

He looked at her and sighed deeply, then threw down a letter, saying:

"Ah, Beulah, I understood long ago why you could not love me; but I hoped years of absence would obliterate the memory that prevented my winning you. I made unusual exertions to discover some trace of your wandering guardian; have written constantly to my former banker in Paris, to find some clew to his whereabouts. Through him I learn that your friend was last heard of at Canton, and the supposition is that he is no longer living. I do not wish to pain you, Beulah, but I would fain show you how frail a hope you cling to. Believe me, dear Beulah, I am not so selfish as to rejoice at his prolonged absence. No, no. Love, such as mine, prizes the happiness of its object above all other things. Were it in my power, I would restore him to you this moment. I had hoped you would learn to love me, but I erred in judging your nature. Henceforth I will cast off this hope, and school myself to regard you as my friend only. I have, at least, deserved your friendship."

"And it is inalienably yours," cried she, very earnestly.

"In future, when toiling to discharge my duties, I may believe I have one sincere friend, who will rejoice at my success?"

"Of this you may well rest assured. It seems a poor return, Mr. Lindsay, for all you have tendered me; but it is the most I can give, the most an honest heart will allow me to offer. Truly, you may always claim my friendship and esteem, if it has any worth."

"I prize it far more than your hand unaccompanied by your heart. Henceforth, we will speak of the past no more; only let me be the friend an orphan may require. You are to live in my uncle's house, I believe; I am very glad you have decided to do so; this is not a proper home for you now. How do you contrive to exorcise loneliness?"

"I do not always succeed very well. My flowers are a great resource; I don't know how I should live without them. My books, too, serve to occupy my attention." She was making a great effort to seem cheerful, but he saw that her smile was forced; and with an assurance that he would see her again before he went to Washington, he shook hands cordially, and left her. She tied her bouquet and dispatched it to the sick child with a few lines of kind remembrance; then took the letter which Mr. Lindsay had thrown on the steps and opened it with trembling fingers:

MR. R. LINDSAY.

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the third came to hand yesterday. As I wrote you before, I accidentally learned that Dr. Hartwell had been in Canton; but since that, have heard nothing from him, and have been unable to trace him further. Letters from Calcutta state that he left that city, more than a year since, for China. Should I obtain any news of him, rest assured it shall be immediately transmitted to you. Very respectfully,

R. A. FIELDS.

She crumpled the sheet, and threw it from her; and if ever earnest, heartspoken prayer availed, her sobbing cry to the God of travelers insured his safety.

CHAPTER XXXI.

By a system of rigid economy in the disposal of her time, Beulah not only attended to her school duties, her music, and her books, but found leisure, after writing her magazine articles, to spend some time each day with the family under whose roof she resided. Dr. Asbury's health was rather feeble, and of late his eyes had grown so dim as to prevent his reading or writing. This misfortune was to a great extent counterbalanced by his wife's devoted attention, and often Beulah shared the duties of the library. One bright Sunday afternoon she walked out to the cemetery, which she visited frequently. In one corner of a small lot, inclosed by a costly iron railing, stood a beautiful marble monument, erected by Mr. Grayson over Lilly's grave. It represented two angels bearing the child up to its God.

She believed; and while a beautiful world linked her to life and duty called to constant and cheerful labor, death lost its hideous aspect. With a firm faith in the Gospel of Christ, she felt that earth with all its loveliness was but a probationary dwelling place, and that death was an angel of God, summoning the laborers to their harvest home.

As she turned her steps homeward, a shadowy smile stole over her features, and the lines about her mouth resumed their wonted composure.

Mrs. Asbury sat at a table, weighing out some medicine he had directed sent to a patient. She looked up as Beulah entered, smiled, and said in an undertone:

"My liege lord is indulging in a nap. Come to the fire, dear; you look cold."

The doctor waked, and began to talk about the severity of the winter farther north, and the suffering it produced among the poor. Presently he said:

"What has become of that child, Beulah—do you know, Alice?"

"Yes; there she is by the window. You were asleep when she came in."

He looked round and called to her.

"What were you thinking about, Beulah? You look as cold as an iceberg. Come to the fire. Warm hands and feet will aid your philosophizing wonderfully."

"I am not philosophizing, sir," she replied, without rising.

"I will wager my elegant new edition of Coleridge against your old one, that you are! Now, out with your cogitations, you incorrigible dreamer!"

"I have won your Coleridge. I was only thinking of that Talmudish tradition regarding Sandalphon, the angel of prayer."

"What of him?"

"Why, that he stands at the gate of heaven, listens to the sounds that ascend from earth, and gathering all the prayers and entreaties, as they are wafted from sorrowing humanity, they change to flowers in his hands, and the perfume is borne into the celestial city to God. Yesterday I read Longfellow's lines on this legend, and suppose my looking up at the stars recalled it to my mind. But Georgia told me you asked for me. Can I do anything for you, sir? Are there any prescriptions you wish written off?" She came and stood by his chair.

"No, thank you, child; but I should like to hear more of that book you were reading to me last night—that is, if it will not weary you, my child."

"Certainly not—here it is. I was waiting for you to ask me for more of it. Shall I begin now, or defer it till after tea?"

"Now, if you please."

Mrs. Asbury seated herself on an ottoman at her husband's feet, and threw her arm over his knee, and opening "Butler's Analogy," Beulah began to read where she left off the previous day, in the chapter on "a future life."

With his hand resting on his wife's head, Dr. Asbury listened attentively. At the conclusion of the chapter she turned to the dissertation on "personal identity," so nearly related to it, and read it slowly and impressively.

"It is remarkably clear and convincing," said the doctor, when she ceased.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"I wish Hartwell would come home, and attend to his business," muttered Dr. Asbury, some weeks later; and as he spoke he threw his feet impatiently over the fender of the grate, looking discontented enough.

"He will come, sir; he will come," answered Beulah, who sat near him.

"How do you know that so well, child? Why do you suppose he will come?" asked the doctor, knitting his bushy gray eyebrows.

"Perhaps, because I wish it so very much; and hope and faith are nearly allied, you know; and perhaps more than this—because I have prayed so long for his return."

She sat with her hands folded, looking quietly into the glowing grate. The old man watched her a moment, as the firelight glared over her grave, composed face, and tears came suddenly into his eyes.

"When Harry Hartwell died (about eighteen months since) he left his share of the estate to Guy. It is one of the finest plantations in the State, and for the last three years the crops have been remarkably good. The cotton has been sold regularly, and the bulk of the money is still in the hands of the factor. Yesterday I happened to pass the old house, and rode in to see how things looked; positively, child, you would scarcely recognize the place. You know the Farleys only occupied it a few months; since that time it has been rented. Just now it is vacant, and such a deserted looking tenement I have not seen for many days. As far as I am concerned——"

Here a servant entered to inform the doctor that he was wanted immediately to see one of his patients. He kicked off his slippers, and got up, grumbling:

"A plague on Guy's peregrinating proclivities! I am getting too old to jump up every three seconds to keep somebody's baby from jerking itself into a spasm or suffocating with the croup. Hartwell ought to be here to take all this practice off my hands."

Beulah went to her own room, and put on her bonnet and cloak. Charon very rarely attended her in her rambles; he had grown old, and was easily fatigued, but this afternoon she called to him, and they set out. It was a mild, sunny evening for winter, and she took the street leading to her guardian's old residence. A quick walk soon brought her into the suburbs, and ere long she stood before the entrance. The great central gate was chained, but the little side gate was completely broken from its hinges, and lay on the ground. Alas! this was but the beginning; as she entered, she saw with dismay that the yard was full of stray cattle. Cows, sheep, goats, browsed about undisturbed among the shrubbery, which her guardian had tended so carefully. She had not been here since he sold it, but even Charon saw that something was strangely amiss. He bounded off, and soon cleared the inclosure of the herd, which had become accustomed to grazing there. Beulah walked slowly up the avenue; the aged cedars whispered hoarsely above her as she passed, and the towering poplars, whose ceaseless rustle had an indescribable charm for her in summers past, now tossed

their bare boughs toward her in mute complaining of the desolation which surrounded them. The reckless indifference of tenants has deservedly grown into a proverb, and here Beulah beheld an exemplification of its truth. Of all the choice shrubbery which it had been the labor of years to collect and foster, not a particle remained. Roses, creepers, bulbs—all were destroyed, and only the trees and hedges were spared. The very outline of the beds was effaced in many places, and, walking round the paved circle in front of the door, she paused abruptly at the desolation which greeted her. Here was the marble basin of the fountain half filled with rubbish, as though it had been converted into a receptacle for trash, and over the whole front of the house, the dark, glossy leaves of the creeping ivy clung in thick masses. She looked around on all sides, but only ruin and neglect confronted her. She remembered the last time she came here, and recalled the beautiful Sunday morning when she saw her guardian standing by the fountain, feeding his pigeons. Ah, how sadly changed! She burst into tears, and sat down on the steps. Charon ran about the yard for some time; then came back, looked up at the somber house, howled, and laid down at her feet. Where was the old master? Wandering among Eastern pagodas, while his home became a retreat for owls.

"He has forgotten us, Charon! He has forgotten his two best friends!" cried she, almost despairingly. Charon gave a melancholy groan of assent, and nestled closer to her. Five years had gone since he left his native land, and for once her faith was faint and wavering. But after some moments she looked up at the calm sky arching above her, and, wiping away her tears, added, resignedly:

"But he will come! God will bring him home when he sees fit! I can wait! I can wait!"

Charon's great, gleaming black eyes met hers wistfully; he seemed dubious of his master's return. Beulah rose, and he obeyed the signal.

"Come, Charon, it is getting late; but we will come back some day, and live here."

It was dusk when she entered the library, and found Mrs. Asbury discussing the political questions of the day with her husband. She had just finished reading aloud one of Reginald's Congressional speeches, and advocated it warmly, while the doctor reprobated some portion of his discourse.

"You have had a long walk," said Mrs. Asbury, looking up as the orphan entered.

"And look, for the universe, as if you had been ghost-seeing," cried the doctor, wiping his spectacles.

"I would rather meet an army of ghosts than see what I have seen!" answered Beulah.

"Good heavens! In the name of wonder, what have you seen, child? A rattlesnake, or a screech-owl?"

"I have been out to see the old place, sir; found the gate broken down, the front yard full of cows, and everything going to destruction, except the trees and hedges. Sir, it makes me feel very sad. I can't bear to have things go on this way any longer. It must be rectified."

"Bless my soul, that is easier said than done! The place is a perfect owl-roost, there is no denying that; but it is no business of ours. If Farley, or his agent, suffers the property to go to ruin, it is his loss."

"But I love the place. I want to save it. Won't you buy it, Dr. Asbury?"

"Won't I buy it? Why, what on earth do you suppose I should do with it? I don't want to live in it; and as for any more investments in real estate, why, just excuse me, if you please! Insurance and repairs eat up all the profits, and I am plagued to death with petitions in the bargain."

"Then I must buy it myself!" said Beulah, resolutely.

"In the name of common sense, what will you do with it?"

"I don't know yet; keep it, I suppose, until he comes home again. How much do you suppose the Farleys ask for it?"

"I really cannot conjecture. But, child, you must not think of this. I will see the agent about it, and perhaps I may purchase it, to oblige you. I will not hear of your buying it. Guy certainly cannot contemplate heathenating much longer. There is that eternal doorbell again! Somebody that believes I am constructed of wire and gutta-percha, I dare say."

He leaned back, and watched the door very uneasily. A servant looked in.

"Mr. Leonard, to see Miss Beulah."

"Thank Heaven, it is nobody to see me!" The doctor settled himself comfortably, and laughed at the perturbed expression of Beulah's countenance.

"Ask him to excuse me this evening," said she, without retiring.

"Nay, my dear; he was here this afternoon, and you had gone to walk. It would be rude not to see him. Go into the parlor; do, my dear; perhaps he will not detain you long," remonstrated Mrs. Asbury.

Beulah said nothing; she set her lips firmly, rose, and went to the parlor.

"Jangle," went the doorbell once more, and this time the doctor was forced to leave his chair and slippers.

It was the morning after her walk to the old home of her guardian that Dr. Asbury threw down the paper on the breakfast table, with an exclamation of horror.

"What is the matter, George?" cried his wife, while Beulah

grew deadly pale, and clutched the paper, her mind, like "Hinda's" —

"Still singling one from all mankind."

"Matter! why poor Grayson has committed suicide—shot himself last night, poor wretch! He has been speculating too freely and lost every cent; and, worse than that used money to do it that was not his. He made desperate throws and lost all; and the end of it was, that when his operations were discovered, he shot himself, leaving his family utterly destitute. I heard yesterday that they would not have a cent; but never dreamed of his being so weak as to kill himself. Miserable mistake!"

"What will become of Mrs. Grayson and Claudia?" asked Beulah, sorrowfully.

"I don't know, really. Mrs. Grayson has a brother living somewhere up the country; I suppose he will offer them a home such as he has. I pity her; she is a weak creature—weak, mind and body; and this reverse will come near killing her."

For some days nothing was discussed but the "Grayson tragedy." It was well the unhappy man could not listen to the fierce maledictions of disappointed creditors and the slanders which were now heaped upon his name. Whatever his motives might have been the world called his offenses by the darkest names, and angry creditors vowed every knife, fork and spoon should come under the hammer. The elegant house was sold—the furniture with it; and Mrs. Grayson and Claudia removed temporarily to a boarding-house. Not one of their fashionable intimates approached them—no, not one. When Claudia went one day to her mantuamaker, to have her mourning fitted, she met a couple of ladies who had formerly been constant visitors at the house, and regular attendants at her parties. Unsuspectingly, she hastened to meet them, but, to her astonishment, instead of greeting her, in their usual fawning manner, they received her with a very cold bow, just touched the tips of her fingers, and gathering up their robes, swept majestically from the room. Rage and mortification forced the tears into her eyes.

Mrs. Asbury had never admired Mrs. Grayson's character; she visited her formally about twice a year; but now, in this misfortune, she alone called to see her. When Claudia returned from the mantuamaker's, she found Mrs. Asbury with her mother, and received from her hand a kind, friendly note from the girl she had so grossly insulted. Beulah was no flatterer; she wrote candidly and plainly; said he would have called at once, had she supposed her company would be acceptable. She would gladly come and see Claudia whenever she desired to see her, and hoped that the memory of other years would teach her the

sincerity of her friendship. Claudia wept bitterly, as she read it, and vainly regretted the superciliousness which had alienated one she knew to be noble and trustworthy. She was naturally an impulsive creature, and without a moment's hesitation, dashed off an answer, all blurred with tears, begging Beulah to overlook her "foolishness," and come to see her.

Accordingly, after school, Beulah went to the house where they were boarding. Claudia met her rather awkwardly, but Beulah kissed her as if nothing had ever occurred to mar their intercourse; and after some desultory conversation, asked her what they expected to do.

"Heaven only knows! Starve, I suppose." She spoke gloomily, and folded her soft white hands over each other, as if the idea of work was something altogether foreign to her mind.

"Claudy, you do not wish to be dependent on a man who dislikes you."

"Not if I can help myself!"

"And you certainly do not wish to be the means of preventing Mrs. Grayson from having a comfortable home with her brother?"

Claudia burst into tears; she did not love her mother, did not even respect her, she was so very weak and childish; yet the young orphan felt very desolate, and knew not what to do. Beulah took her hand, and said, kindly:

"If you are willing to help yourself, dear Claudy, I will gladly do all I can to assist you. I think I can secure you a situation as teacher of drawing, and, until you can make something at it, I will pay your board; and you shall stay with me, if you like. You can think about it, and let me know as soon as you decide."

Claudia thanked her cordially, and returning home, Beulah immediately imparted the plan to her friends. They thought it would scarcely succeed, Claudia had been so petted and spoiled. Beulah sat gazing into the fire for a while; then, looking at the doctor, said abruptly:

"There is that Graham money, sir, doing nobody any good."

"That is just what I have been telling you for the last six years. I have invested it carefully, until it has almost doubled itself."

"It would make them very comfortable!" continued she, thoughtfully.

"Make them very comfortable!" repeated the doctor, throwing his cigar into the grate, and turning suddenly toward her.

"Yes, Claudia and Mrs. Grayson."

"Beulah Benton! are you going insane, I should like to know? Here you are, working hard every day of your life, and do you suppose I shall suffer you to give that legacy (nearly nine thousand dollars!) to support two broken-down fashion-

ables in idleness? Whoever heard such a piece of business since the world began? I will not consent to it! I tell you now, the money shall not leave my hands for any such purpose."

"Oh, sir, it would make me so very happy to aid them. You cannot conceive how much pleasure it would afford me."

"Look here, child, all that sort of angelic disinterestedness sounds very well done up in a novel, but the reality is quite another matter. Mrs. Grayson treated you like a brute; and it is not to be expected that you will have any extraordinary degree of affection for her. Human nature is spiteful and unforgiving; and as for your piling coals of fire on her head to the amount of nine thousand dollars, that is being entirely too magnanimous."

"I want to make Mrs. Grayson amends, sir. Once, when I was maddened by sorrow and pain, I said something which I always repented bitterly." As Beulah spoke, a cloud swept across her face.

"What was it, child? What did you say?"

"I cursed her! besought God to punish her severely for her unkindness to me. I hardly knew what I was saying; but even then it shocked me, and I prayed God to forgive my passion. I shudder when I remember it. I have forgiven her heartlessness long ago; and now, sir, I want you to give me that money. If it is mine at all, it is mine to employ as I choose."

"Cornelia did not leave the legacy to the Graysons."

"Were she living, she would commend the use I am about to make of it. Will you give me five thousand dollars of it?"

"Oh, Beulah, you are a queer compound! a strange being!"

"Will you give me five thousand dollars of that money to-morrow?" persisted Beulah, looking steadily at him.

"Yes, child, if you will have it so." His voice trembled, and he looked at the orphan with moist eyes.

Mrs. Asbury had taken no part in the conversation, but her earnest face attested her interest. Passing her arm around Beulah's waist, she hastily kissed her brow, and only said:

"God bless you, my dear, noble Beulah!"

"I do not see that I am at all magnanimous in giving away other people's money. If I had earned it by hard labor, and then given it to Claudy, there would have been some more show of generosity. Here come Georgia and her husband; you do not need me to read this evening, and I have work to do." She extricated herself from Mrs. Asbury's clasping arm and retired to her own room. The following day, Claudia came to say that, as she knew not what else to do, she would gladly accept the position mentioned as teacher of drawing and painting. Mrs. Grayson's brother had come to take her home, but she was unwilling to be separated from Claudia. Beulah no longer hesitated, and the sum of five thousand dollars seemed to poor

Claudia a fortune indeed. She could not understand how the girl, whom she and her mother had insulted, could possibly have the means of making them so comparatively comfortable. Beulah briefly explained the circumstances which had enabled her to assist them. The bulk of the money remained in Dr. Asbury's hands, and Claudia was to apply to him whenever she needed it. She and her mamma found a cheaper boarding-house, and Claudia's duties began at once. Mrs. Grayson was overwhelmed with shame when the particulars were made known to her, and tears of bitter mortification could not obliterate the memory of the hour when she cruelly denied the prayer of the poor orphan to whom she now owed the shelter above her head. Beulah did not see her for many weeks subsequent; she knew how painful such a meeting would be to the humbled woman, and while she constantly cheered and encouraged Claudia in her work, she studiously avoided Mrs. Grayson's presence.

Thus the winter passed; and once more the glories of a Southern spring were scattered over the land. To the Asburys Beulah was warmly attached, and her residence with them was as pleasant as any home could possibly have been, which was not her own. They were all that friends could be to an orphan; still, she regretted her little cottage, and missed the home-feeling she had prized so highly. True, she had constant access to the greenhouse, and was rarely without her bouquet of choice flowers; but these could not compensate her for the loss of her own little garden. She struggled bravely with discontent; tried to look only on the sunshine in her path, and to be always cheerful. In this she partially succeeded; no matter how lonely and sad she felt, she hid it carefully, and the evenings in the library were never marred by words of repining or looks of sorrow. To the close observer, there were traces of grief in her countenance; and sometimes when she sat sewing while Mrs. Asbury read aloud, it was easy to see that her thoughts had wandered far from that little room. Time had changed her singularly since the old asylum days. She was now a finely-formed, remarkably graceful woman, with a complexion of dazzling transparency. She was always pale, but the blue veins might be traced anywhere on her brow and temples; and the dark, gray eyes, with their long, jetty, curling lashes, possessed an indescribable charm, even for strangers. She had been an ugly child, but certainly she was a noble-looking if not handsome woman. To all but the family with whom she resided, she was rather reserved; and while the world admired and eulogized her talents as a writer, she felt that, except Eugene, she had no friends beyond the threshold of the house she lived in. As weeks and months elapsed, and no news of her wandering guardian came, her hope began to pale. For weary years it

had burned brightly, but constant disappointment was pressing heavily on her heart, and crushing out the holy spark. The heartstrings will bear rude shocks and sudden rough handling, but the gradual tightening, the unremitted tension of long, tediously-rolling years, will in time accomplish what fierce assaults cannot. Continually she prayed for his return, but, despite her efforts her faith grew fainter as each month crept by, and her smile became more constrained and joyless. She never spoke of her anxiety, never alluded to him, but pressed her hands over her aching heart and did her work silently—nay, cheerfully.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE day was dull, misty and gusty. All the morning there had been a driving southeasterly rain; but toward noon, there was a lull. The afternoon was heavy and threatening, while armies of dense clouds drifted before the wind. Dr. Asbury had not yet returned from his round of evening visits; Mrs. Asbury had gone to the asylum to see a sick child, and Georgia was dining with her husband's mother. Beulah came home from school more than usually fatigued; one of the assistant teachers was indisposed, and she had done double work to relieve her. She sat before her desk, writing industriously on an article she had promised to complete before the end of the week. Her head ached; the lines grew dim, and she laid aside her manuscript and leaned her face on her palms. The beautiful lashes lay against her brow, for the eyes were raised to the portrait above her desk, and she gazed up at the faultless features with an expression of sad hopelessness. Years had not filled the void in her heart with other treasures. At this hour it ached with its own desolation, and extending her arms imploringly toward the picture, she exclaimed, sorrowfully:

"Oh, my God! how long must I wait? Oh, how long?"

She opened the desk, and taking out a key, left her room, and slowly ascended to the third story. Charon crept up the steps after her. She unlocked the apartment which Mrs. Asbury had given into her charge some time before, and raising one of the windows, looped back the heavy blue curtains which gave a somber hue to all within. From this elevated position she could see the stormy, sullen waters of the bay breaking against the wharves, and hear their hoarse muttering as they rocked themselves to rest after the scourging of the tempest. Gray clouds hung low, and scudded northward; everything looked dull and gloomy. She turned from the window and glanced around the room. It was at all times a painful pleasure to come here, and now, particularly, the interior impressed

her sadly. Here were the paintings and statues she had long been so familiar with, and here, too, the melodeon which at rare intervals she opened. The house was very quiet; not a sound came up from below; she raised the lid of the instrument, and played a plaintive prelude. Echoes, seven or eight years old, suddenly fell on her ears; she had not heard one note of this air since she left Dr. Hartwell's roof. It was a favorite song of his; a German hymn he had taught her, and now after seven years she sang it. It was a melancholy air, and as her trembling voice rolled through the house, she seemed to live the old days over again. But the words died away on her lips; she had overestimated her strength; she could not sing it. The marble images around her, like ghosts of the past, looked mutely down at her grief. She could not weep; her eyes were dry, and there was an intolerable weight on her heart. Just before her stood the Niobe, rigid and woful; she put her hands over her eyes, and drooped her face on the melodeon. Gloom and despair crouched at her side, their gaunt hands tugging at the anchor of hope. The wind rose and howled round the corners of the house; how fierce it might be on trackless seas, driving lonely barks down to ruin, and strewing the main with ghastly, upturned faces. She shuddered and groaned. It was a dark hour of trial, and she struggled desperately with the phantoms that clustered about her. Then there came other sounds: Charon's shrill, frantic bark and whine of delight. For years she had not heard that peculiar bark, and started up in wonder. On the threshold stood a tall form, with a straw hat drawn down over the features, but Charon's paws were on the shoulders, and his whine of delight ceased not. He fell down at his master's feet and caressed them. Beulah looked an instant, and sprang into the doorway, holding out her arms, with a wild, joyful cry:

"Come at last! Oh, thank God! Come at last!" Her face was radiant, her eyes burned, her glowing lips parted.

Leaning against the door, with his arms crossed over his broad chest, Dr. Hartwell stood, silently regarding her. She came close to him, and her extended arms trembled, still he did not move, did not speak.

"Oh, I knew you would come; and, thank God, now you are here. Come home at last!"

She looked up at him so eagerly; but he said nothing. She stood an instant irresolute, then threw her arms around his neck, and laid her head on his bosom, clinging closely to him. He did not return the embrace, but looked down at the beaming face, and sighed; then he put his hand softly on her head, and smoothed the rippling hair. A brilliant smile broke over her features, as she felt the remembered touch of his fingers

on her forehead, and she repeated in the low tones of deep gladness:

"I knew you would come; oh, sir, I knew you would come back to me!"

"How did you know it, child?" he said, for the first time.

Her heart leaped wildly at the sound of the loved voice she had so longed to hear, and she answered, tremblingly:

"Because for weary years I have prayed for your return. Oh, only God knows how fervently I prayed; and He has heard me."

She felt his strong frame quiver; he folded his arms about her, clasped her to his heart with a force that almost suffocated her, and bending his head, kissed her passionately. Suddenly his arms relaxed their clasp; holding her off, he looked at her keenly, and said:

"Beulah Benton, do you belong to the tyrant Ambition, or do you belong to that tyrant, Guy Hartwell? Quick, child, decide."

"I have decided," said she. Her cheeks burned; her lashes drooped.

"Well?"

"Well, if I am to have a tyrant, I believe I prefer belonging to you!"

He frowned. She smiled and looked up at him.

"Beulah, I don't want a grateful wife. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Beulah, do you cling to me because you love me? or because you pity me? or because you are grateful to me for past love and kindness? Answer me, Beulah."

"Because you are my all."

"How long have I been your all?"

"Oh, longer than I knew myself!" was the evasive reply.

He tried to look at her, but she pressed her face close to his shoulder, and would not suffer it.

"Beulah!"

"Well, sir."

"You have changed in many things, since we parted, nearly six years ago?"

"Yes, I thank God, I am changed. My infidelity was a source of many sorrows; but the clouds have passed from my mind; I have found the truth in Holy Writ." Now she raised her head, and looked at him very earnestly.

"Child, does your faith make you happy?"

"Yes, the universe could not purchase it," she answered, solemnly.

There was a brief silence. He put both hands on her shoulders, and, stooping down, kissed her brow.

"And you prayed for me, Beulah?"

"Yes, evening and morning. Prayed that you might be shielded from all dangers, and brought safely home. And there was one other thing which I prayed for not less fervently than for your return—that God would melt your hard, bitter heart, and give you a knowledge of the truth of the Christian religion. Oh, sir, I thought sometimes that possibly you might die in a far-off land, and then I should see you no more, in time or eternity! and oh, the thought nearly drove me wild! My guardian, my all, let me not have prayed in vain." She clasped his hand in hers, and looked up pleadingly into the loved face; and, for the first time in her life, she saw tears glistening in the burning eyes. He said nothing, however; took her face in his hands, and scanned it earnestly, as if reading all that had passed during his long absence. Presently he asked:

"So you would not marry Lindsay, and go to Congress? Why not?"

"Who told you anything about him?"

"No matter. Why did not you marry him?"

"Because I did not love him."

"He is a noble-hearted, generous man."

"Yes, very; I do not know his superior."

"What?"

"I mean what I say," said she, firmly.

He smiled, one of his genial, irresistible smiles; and she smiled also, despite herself. "Give me your hand, Beulah?"

She did so very quietly.

"There—is it mine?"

"Yes, sir, if you want it."

"And may I claim it as soon as I choose?"

"Yes, sir."

She had never seen him look as he did then. His face kindled, as if in a broad flash of light; the eyes dazzled her, and she turned her face away, as he drew her once more to his bosom, and exclaimed:

"At last, then, after years of sorrow, and pain, and bitterness, I shall be happy in my own home; shall have a wife, a companion, who loves me for myself alone. Ah, Beulah, my idol, I will make you happy!"

The rain fell heavily, and it grew dark, for the night came rapidly down. There was a furious ringing of the library bell, the doctor had come home, and, as usual, wanted half-a-dozen things at once.

"Have you seen Dr. Asbury?"

"No. I came directly to the house; saw no one as I entered; and hearing the melodeon, followed the sound."

"What a joyful surprise it will be to him?" said Beulah,

closing the window, and locking the melodeon. She led the way down the steps, followed by her guardian and Charon.

"Suppose you wait a while in the music-room? It adjoins the library, and you can see and hear, without being seen," suggested she, with her hand on the bolt of the door. He assented, and stood near the threshold which connected the rooms, while Beulah went into the library. The gas burned brightly, and the doctor sat leaning far back in his armchair, with his feet on an ottoman. His wife stood near him, stroking the gray hair from his furrowed brow.

"Alice, I wish, dear, you would get me an iced lemonade, will you?"

"Let me make it for you," said Beulah, coming forward.

"Come here, child! What ails you? Why, bless my soul, Beulah, what is the matter? I never saw the blood in your face before; and your great, solemn eyes seem to be dancing a jig. What ails you, child?" He grasped her hands eagerly.

"Nothing ails me! I am well——"

"I know better! Has Charon gone mad and bit you? Oho! by all the dead gods of Greece, Guy has come home! Where is he? Where is he?"

He sprang up, nearly knocking his wife down, and looked around the room. Dr. Hartwell emerged from the music-room and advanced to meet him.

"Oh, Guy! You heathen! you Philistine! you prodigal!"

He bounded over a chair, and locked his arms round the tall form, while his gray head dropped on his friend's shoulder. Beulah stole out quickly, and, in the solitude of her own room, fell on her knees, and returned thanks to the God who hears and answers prayers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was a sparkling August morning—one of those rare days, when all nature seems jubilant. The waters of the bay glittered like a sheet of molten silver; the soft southern breeze sang through the treetops, and the cloudless sky wore that deep shade of pure blue, which is nowhere so beautiful as in our sunny South. Clad in a dress of spotless white, with her luxuriant hair braided, and twined with white flowers, Beulah stood beside her window, looking out into the street below. Her hands were clasped tightly over her heart, and on one slender finger blazed a costly diamond, the seal of her betrothal. She was very pale; now and then her lips quivered, and her lashes were wet with tears. Yet this was her marriage day. She had just risen from her knees, and her countenance told of a troubled heart. She loved her guardian

above everything else; knew that, separated from him, life would be a dreary blank to her; yet, much as she loved him, she could not divest herself of a species of fear, of dread. The thought of being his wife filled her with vague apprehension. He had hastened the marriage; the old place had been thoroughly repaired and refurnished, and this morning she would go home a wife. She clasped her hands over her eyes; the future looked fearful. She knew the passionate, exacting nature of the man with whose destiny she was about to link her own, and she shrank back as the image of Creola rose before her. The door opened, and Mrs. Asbury entered, accompanied by Dr. Hartwell. The orphan looked up, and leaned heavily against the window. Mrs. Asbury broke the silence.

"They are waiting for you, my dear. The minister came some moments ago. The clock has struck ten."

She handed her a pair of gloves from the table, and stood in the door, waiting for her. Beulah drew them on, and then, with a long breath, glanced at Dr. Hartwell. He looked restless, and she thought sterner, than she had seen him since his return. He was very pale and his lips were compressed firmly.

"You look frightened, Beulah. You tremble," said he drawing her arm through his, and fixing his eyes searchingly on her face.

"Yes. Oh, yes. I believe I am frightened," she answered, with a constrained smile.

She saw his brow darken, and his cheek flush, but he said no more, and led her down to the parlor, where the members of the family were assembled. Claudia and Eugene were also present. The minister met them in the center of the room; and there, in the solemn hush, a few questions were answered, a plain band of gold encircled her finger, and the deep tones of the clergyman pronounced her Guy Hartwell's wife. Eugene took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly, whispering:

"God bless you, dear sister and friend! I sincerely hope that your married life will prove happier than mine."

Their congratulations wearied her, and she was glad when the carriage came to bear her away. Bidding adieu to her friends, she was handed into the carriage, and Dr. Hartwell took his seat beside her. The ride was short; neither spoke, and when the door was opened, and she entered the well-remembered house, she would gladly have retreated to the greenhouse, and sought solitude to collect her thoughts; but a hand caught hers, and she found herself seated on a sofa in the study. She felt that a pair of eyes were riveted on her face, and suddenly the blood surged into her white cheeks. Her hand lay clasped in his, and her head drooped lower, to avoid his searching gaze.

"Oh, Beulah! my wife! why are you afraid of me?"

The low, musical tones caused her heart to thrill strangely; she made a great effort, and lifted her head. She saw the expression of sorrow that clouded his face; saw his white brow wrinkle; and as her eye fell on the silver threads scattered through his brown hair, there came an instant revolution of feeling; fear vanished; love reigned supreme. She threw her arms up about his neck, and exclaimed:

"I am not afraid of you now. May God bless my guardian! my husband!"

Reader, marriage is not the end of life; it is but the beginning of a new course of duties; but I cannot now follow Beulah. Henceforth her history is bound up with another's. To save her husband from his unbelief is the labor of future years. She had learned to suffer, and to bear patiently; and though her path looks sunny, and her heart throbs with happy hopes, this one shadow lurks over her home and dims her joys. Weeks and months glided swiftly on. Dr. Hartwell's face lost its stern rigidity, and his smile became constantly genial. His wife was his idol; day by day his love for her seemed more completely to revolutionize his nature. His cynicism melted insensibly away; his lips forgot their iron expression; now and then his long-forgotten laugh rang through the house. Beulah was conscious of the power she wielded, and trembled lest she fail to employ it properly. One Sabbath afternoon she sat in her room, with her cheek on her hand, absorbed in earnest thought. Her little Bible lay on her lap, and she was pondering the text she had heard that morning. Charon came and nestled his huge head against her. Presently she heard the quick tramp of hoofs and whirl of wheels; and soon after, her husband entered and sat down beside her.

"What are you thinking of?" said he, passing his hand over her head, carelessly.

"Thinking of my life—of the bygone years of struggle."

"They are past, and can trouble you no more. 'Let the dead past bury its dead!'"

"No, my past can never die. I ponder it often, and it does me good; strengthens me, by keeping me humble. I was just thinking of the dreary, desolate days and nights I passed, searching for a true philosophy, and going further astray with every effort. I was so proud of my intellect; put so much faith in my own powers; it was no wonder I was so benighted."

"Where is your old worship of genius?" asked her husband, watching her curiously.

"I have not lost it all. I hope I never shall. Human genius has accomplished a vast deal for man's temporal existence. The physical sciences have been wheeled forward in the march

of mind, and man's earthly path gemmed with all that a merely sensual nature could desire. But looking aside from these channels, what has it effected for philosophy, that great burden, which constantly recalls the fabled labors of Sisyphus and the Danaides? Since the rising of Bethlehem's star, in the cloudy sky of polytheism, what has human genius discovered of God, eternity, destiny? Metaphysicians build gorgeous cloud palaces, but the soul cannot dwell in their cold, misty atmosphere. Antiquarians wrangle and write; Egypt's moldering monuments are raked from their desert graves, and made the theme of scientific debate; but has all this learned disputation contributed one iota to clear the thorny way of strict morality? Put the Bible out of sight, and how much will human intellect discover concerning our origin—our ultimate destiny? In the morning of time, sages handled these vital questions, and died, not one step nearer the truth than when they began. Now, our philosophers struggle, earnestly and honestly, to make plain the same inscrutable mysteries. Yes, blot out the records of Moses, and we would grope in starless night; for notwithstanding the many priceless blessings it has discovered for man, the torch of science will never pierce or illumine the recesses over which Almighty God has hung his veil. Here we see, indeed, as 'through a glass, darkly.' Yet I believe the day is already dawning when scientific data will not only cease to be antagonistic to scriptural accounts, but will deepen the impress of Divinity on the pages of holy writ; when 'the torch shall be taken out of the hand of the infidel, and set to burn in the temple of the living God'; when Science and Religion shall link hands. I revere the lonely thinkers to whom the world is indebted for its great inventions. I honor the tireless laborers who toil in laboratories; who sweep midnight skies, in search of new worlds; who upheave primeval rocks, hunting for footsteps of Deity; and I believe that every scientific fact will ultimately prove but another lamp planted along the path which leads to a knowledge of Jehovah! Ah! it is indeed peculiarly the duty of Christians 'to watch, with reverence and joy, the unveiling of the august brow of Nature by the hand of Science, and to be ready to call mankind to a worship ever new!' Human thought subserves many useful, nay, noble ends; the Creator gave it as a powerful instrument to improve man's temporal condition; but oh, sir, I speak for what I know when I say: alas, for that soul who forsakes the divine ark, and embarks on the gilded toys of man's invention, hoping to breast the billows of life, and be anchored safely in the harbor of eternal rest! The heathens, 'having no law, are a law unto themselves'; but for such as deliberately reject the given light, only bitterness remains. I know it; for I, too, once groped, wailing for help."

"Your religion is full of mystery," said her husband, gravely.

"Yes, of divine mystery. Truly, 'a God comprehended is no God at all!' Christianity is clear as to rules of life and duty. There is no mystery left about the directions to man; yet there is a divine mystery infolding it, which tells of its divine origin, and promises a fuller revelation when man is fitted to receive it. If it were not so, we would call it man's invention. You turn from Revelation because it contains some things you cannot comprehend; yet you plunge into a deeper, darker mystery when you embrace the theory of an eternal self-existing universe, having no intelligent creator, yet constantly creating intelligent beings. Sir, can you understand how matter creates mind?"

She had laid her Bible on his knee; her folded hands rested upon it, and her gray eyes, clear and earnest, looked up reverently into her husband's noble face. His soft hand wandered over her head, and he seemed pondering her words.

May God aid the wife in her holy work of love.

THE END.

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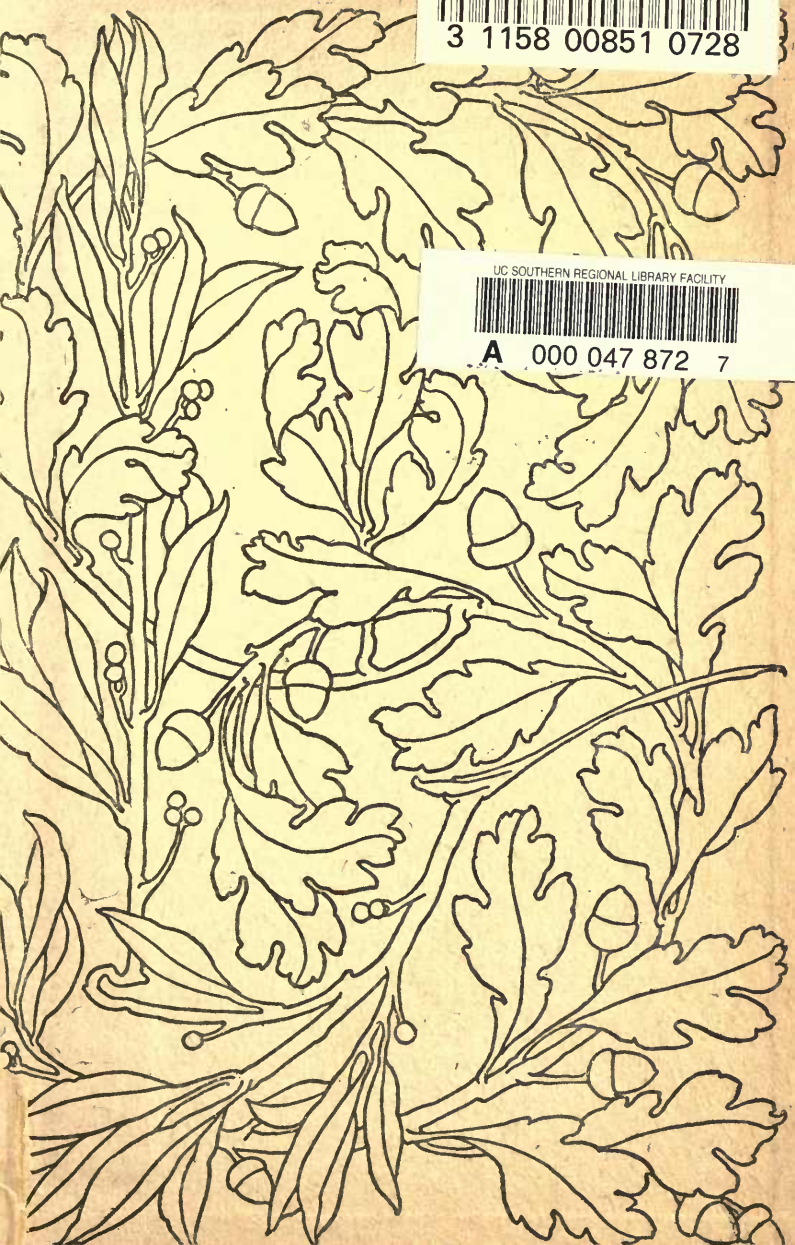


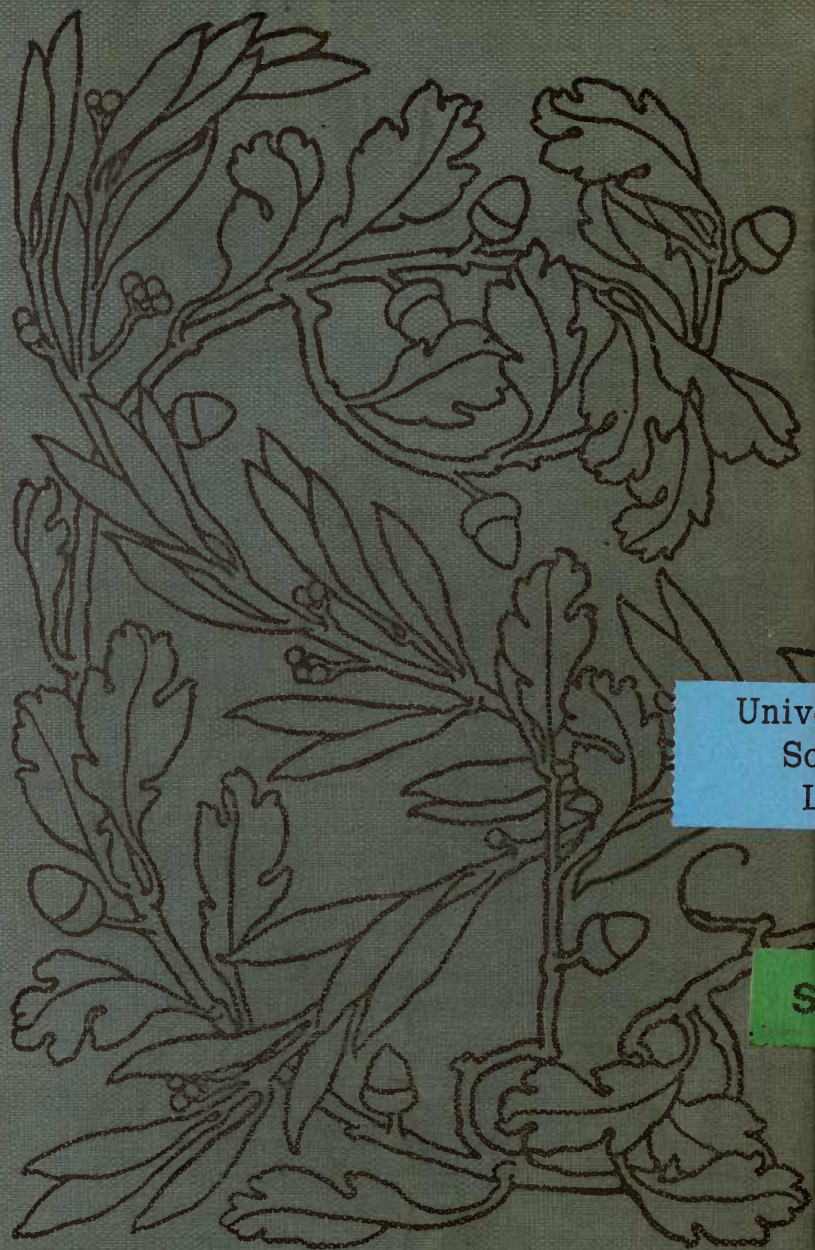
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